



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 292

Śrī Saphalā Ekādaśī

8 January 2013

Circulation 6,138

Highlights

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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

•Hear and Distribute Srimad Bhagavatam

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• The Glories of Raising a Flag over the Lord's Temple

Padma Purāṇa

ALWAYS SEEING GOD

***His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada***

Everything requires qualification. This Krishna consciousness movement is meant for qualifying you to see God twenty-four hours a day. This is the sum and substance of Krishna consciousness. If you learn this art, then you will see God twenty-four hours a day, without any stop. A yogi means that. Yogi does not mean to play some magic. Magicians can also play magic. A devotee is not interested to show any magic, but he is interested to see the supreme magician who is performing so much magic. The yogis, they are thinking, "If I can do some magic, then so many people will applaud, and that is my success." But a devotee doesn't want anything. A devotee only wants to see who is behind the magic, the supreme magician. ❧

— From a lecture in New Orleans on 31 July 1975.

HEAR AND DISTRIBUTE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The Supreme Lord descends in the form of *bhāgavata-kathā*. The *bhakta-bhāgavata* speaks *bhāgavata*. He is the embodiment of *bhāgavata*. We hear this word "*bhāgavata*" in two places — *grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata* — the book *bhāgavata* and the devotee *bhāgavata*. The Supreme Lord gives *bhakti-rasa* through these two *bhāgavatas*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 1.100) states:



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*dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tānhāra hṛdaye tānra preme haya vaśa*

Through the *grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata* the Lord gives *prema*. Krishna becomes bound up by *prema-bhakti*, *bhakti-rasa*, the mellow of *bhakti*. Therefore the *bhāgavata-grantha* has its mercy. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (madhya 20.120) says:

*sādhū-sāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya
sei jīva tāraye, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya*

If the conditioned soul becomes Krishna conscious by the mercy of saintly persons and the mercy of *śāstra*, he is then liberated from the clutches of *māyā*, who gives him up.

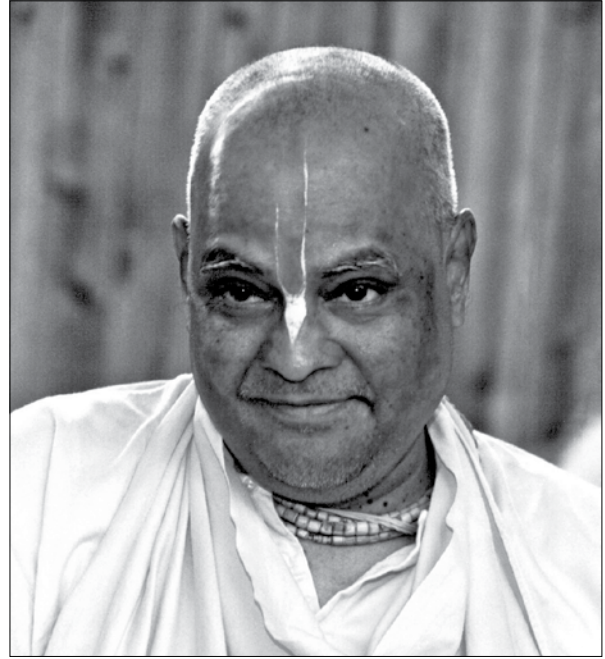
If some *jīva* is fortunate, he gets the mercy of *sādhū* and *śāstra*. *Śāstra* has *kṛpā*, mercy. It is not a mere book. The *Bhāgavata* is as good as Krishna — *kṛṣṇa-tulya bhāgavata* [Cc. madhya 24.318].

If someone thinks it is a mere book then he commits an *aparādha*. He is a *mleccha*, *yavana*, a great offender. He must be punished by Yamaraj life after life. We should not think that it is just a book. No. It has *krpā*. *Sādhu-śāstra-krpā*, *sādhu* has *krpā* and *śāstra* has *krpā*. Especially *bhāgavata-śāstra* has *krpā*.

If by the mercy of *sādhu* and *śāstra* someone develops Krishna consciousness, they will be free from the clutches of *māyā*. This is why Srila Prabhupada stresses book distribution. If someone distributes this *bhāgavata*, if someone takes it, even if they don't read it, if they only keep it in their house, still they will get mercy. The day will come when he will get mercy. We give the example of the ass. The ass is beast of burden carrying a heavy load of big logs of wood. His master gives him lashes, "You must carry this!" In the course of his labor, sometimes he carries a log of sandalwood. Sandalwood has a nice scent which touches the nostrils of the ass. He then thinks, "Oh, my life is successful today; I am carrying such a nice scented thing." A similar thing is there with the *bhāgavata*. When you distribute the *bhāgavata* in Western countries, materialistic persons don't know the glory of the *bhāgavata*. They are very interested to read fiction stories, novels, sexual topics between a girl and boy. They don't know what the *bhāgavata* is. Still you go and push, push, push: "Take one! Take one! Take one! Give some dollars, all right." A *vaiṣṇava* showers mercy thereby. "He took a *bhāgavata*. 'It is very cheap, sir. Please take it.'"

"All right," and he takes it.

If you give a necklace of pearls to a monkey, what will he do with it? A monkey will bite it, "Oh yes, this is nice food I can eat", and then he throws it. Western people sometimes throw the book in the garbage. But if he doesn't throw it into the garbage, if he keeps it in the house, then he will get mercy. Sooner or later a day will come, just as the ass smells the nice scent of sandalwood he is carrying, similarly such a person will get mercy, "What kind of book have I purchased?" He opens a page and is astonished, "Oh!" Because it is *nigama-kalpa-taror galita-phala* — "the most ripened, sweetest, nectarean juicy fruit of the Vedic tree." [Bhag. 1.1.3] It is not an ordinary book. "Oh, so sweet!" Getting mercy, either he or his son can taste the sweetness of that book. Or suppose he cannot taste it, and the



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

book lays around his apartment or room. One day his son will say, "Oh, my father has brought some book. Let me read it." Then he will get some mercy.

If some fortunate *jīva* gets the mercy of *sādhu* and *śāstra*, he develops Krishna consciousness. He will be free from the clutches of *māyā* and he will be delivered. Such benefit and mercy is there. Therefore *bhāgavata-śravaṇa*, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is a daily activity. The day you have not heard the *bhāgavata* is a very bad day. ❀

— From a lecture in Romford, England. 3 August, 1994.

THE GLORIES OF RAISING A FLAG OVER THE LORD'S TEMPLE

Adapted from Nārada Purāṇa,
Canto 1 chapter 20

In *Satya-yuga* there was a king named Sumati of the lunar dynasty. He was a great devotee of Lord Hari, being always absorbed in the Lord's worship and the narrations of his pastimes. He was very pious and truthful and he happily engaged in the service of the *vaiṣṇavas*.

Sumati's queen was named Satyamati. She was very chaste and endowed with all auspicious characteristics. Both the husband and wife were able to remember their past lives. Together they would worship Lord Hari. On every *dvādaśī* the king would place a nice flag atop the temple of Lord Vishnu. Knowing of King Sumati's reputation as a very pious devotee, the sage Vibhandaka came to visit him along with a group of his disciples.

Upon hearing of the arrival of the sage, the king and queen went out of the city to greet him, taking extensive paraphernalia for his worship. Finally, after the sage was seated comfortably, King Sumati took a lower seat and said, “I am very happy because of your visit. Good men always greatly praise the arrival of a saintly personality.

*yatra syān mahatānī prema tatra syuḥ sarva-sampadaḥ
tejaḥ kīrtir dhanānī putrā itī prāhur vipaścitāḥ*

Learned men say that all riches are where great men offer their affection. Brilliance, fame, wealth, and progeny also abide there. (Text 18)

*tatra vṛddhim upāyānti śreyānīs yat udinānī mune
yatra santaḥ prakurvanti mahatānī karuṇānī prabho*

O holy sage, all good fortune and welfare flourish day by day where good men bestow their great mercy. (Text 19)

*yo mūrdhni dhārayed brahman mahat pāda-jalanī rajah
sa snātaḥ sarva-tirtheṣu puṇyātmā nātra saṁśayaḥ*

There is no doubt that he who wears on his head the dust and water that has washed the feet of great men is a meritorious soul. He has the benefit of bathing in all sacred rivers. (Text 20)

“O learned brahmin, my wife, sons, riches and whatever else I have are dedicated for your service. Please tell me what can I do to serve you.”

Being very satisfied by the king’s humility, the sage fondly stroked him with his hand and said, “O king, your actions and words are just befitting your exalted lineage. It is humility alone that awards one the four *puruṣārthas* — *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* — virtue, wealth, enjoyment and liberation. What is difficult to attain for noble souls such as you?”

“I wish to ask one thing of you. Of the many practices that are pleasing to Lord Vishnu, you have chosen to engage in the installation of a flag atop the temple as your main method of worship. Your wife also simply engages in dancing before the deity in the temple. Why is this? Kindly explain it to me.”

Maharaja Sumati said, “Formerly, I was an evil-minded *śūdra* named Malini. I hated righteousness, constantly

criticized others, and acted in a way to cause others harm. Among other sinful acts, I used to plunder the wealth of temples and kill cows and brahmins. My speech was always harsh and I passed my time dallying with prostitutes.

“After some time, my kinsmen rejected me, so I went to live in the forest where I ate the meat of deer and other animals and robbed whatever wayfarers came my way. It was a miserable life, isolated from society. One very hot summer day, when I was famished and thirsty, I came across an old, dilapidated temple of Lord Vishnu. Nearby was a lake teeming with swans and ducks. I drank the cool water and ate some fruit from the trees on the shore. In this way, I became refreshed and began to reside in that old, broken-down temple.

“Gradually, I repaired the temple by using pieces of wood and putting back the stones that had fallen. I kept it clean by sweeping the area daily. In this way, I continued living the life of a hunter, killing animals for my subsistence. I went on in this way for twenty years.

“One day, a Nishada lady happened to come there. She was from the land adjoining the Vindhya mountains. Her name was Avakokila and she had also been abandoned by her kinsmen. Like me, she was also miserable and emaciated. Upon seeing her, I felt sympathy and so I gave her water, fruit, and freshly killed meat. After being refreshed, she inquired from me about my life and told me about hers. She had been rejected by her family because she was unchaste, a thief, and was always maligning others. Still, her husband continued to maintain her, until one

JAGANNATH’S FLAG



A famous poem in Oriya states:

nilacakra ho!

*dekha uḍūchi bānā, patita-pāvana nāmaṭi yā’ra nān
āsa āsa bolī pātakī-mānaku ḍāku-achi parā saṅgāta anā*

O Nilachakra! [The Sudarshan Chakra on the roof of the Puri temple is called Nilachakra.] Just see the fluttering flag of Lord Jagannath next to you. Being non-different from Lord Jagannath, that flag is also known as *patita-pāvana*, since those whose are not allowed inside the temple can get the benefit of seeing the Lord by its *darśana*. In fact, by its fluttering it seems to be calling all fallen people to come together and get the mercy of Lord Jagannath. ॐ

Photo by Sri Govinda Das



Flags over the Jagannath Temple in Puri

day he died. Ever since that time she had been wandering in the forest until she one day came to where I was staying.

“Thereafter, we remained together as husband and wife, living in that temple and subsisting upon fruit and meat. Then, one night, after becoming intoxicated by drinking wine, we began to dance in the temple,

—

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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blissfully unconcerned about our condition. At that time, as the result of our past fruitive activities, the duration of both of our lives came to an end.

“As we were absorbed in dancing, the terrible servants of Yamaraja appeared upon the scene with their nooses prepared to take us to hell for terrible punishment. However, just at that time, being pleased by our service of cleaning his temple, Lord Vishnu sent his servants to protect us. These four-armed Vishnudutas, who were splendidous like the sun, forbade the Yamadutas from binding us.

“An argument then took place between the Vishnudutas and the Yamadutas. The Yamadutas considered us to be great sinners and thus liable for punishment in hell. The Vishnudutas refuted this, however, pointing out that we had become freed from all sins by rendering service to the Lord.

“The Vishnudutas said, ‘At the time of death, this woman was dancing before the deity of Lord Vishnu and this man had just installed a flag atop the temple. Because of this, they became absolved of all sins. Simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord, or even by hearing it, at the time of death, one attains the Lord’s abode in the spiritual sky. What then can be said of those who engage in the Lord’s service? These two have been cleansing the temple of the Lord and repairing it. How then can they deserve to experience the torments of hell?’

“After saying this, the Vishnudutas cut our bonds and took us in celestial chariots to the abode of Lord Vishnu within this material world. [For more about Lord Vishnu’s planet in this material world, see the article “The Mouse, the Lamp and the Queen” in Bindu issue 187.] There, we attained the association of the Lord (*sāmīpya-mukti*). After enjoying divine pleasures there for a very long time, we were again born here on earth.”

King Sumati concluded his narration to the sage Vibhandaka by saying, “By rendering service to the Lord, without desiring anything in return, we attained this wonderful result.”

After hearing all this, the sage praised King Sumati highly and then returned to his ashram. ॐ

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- *Nārada Purāṇa*. Sanskrit with Hindi translation. Sahitya Sammelan. 1989. Prayag.



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 293

Śrī Putradā Ekādaśī

22 January 2013

Circulation 6,186

Highlights

- **PLEASING KRISHNA PRACTICALLY**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **PREACHING BOLDLY**

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

- **SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS — PART TWO**

Some points from the commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.15

- **ETIQUETTE OF SPEAKING AND HEARING**

Nārada Purāṇa 1.1.73-74

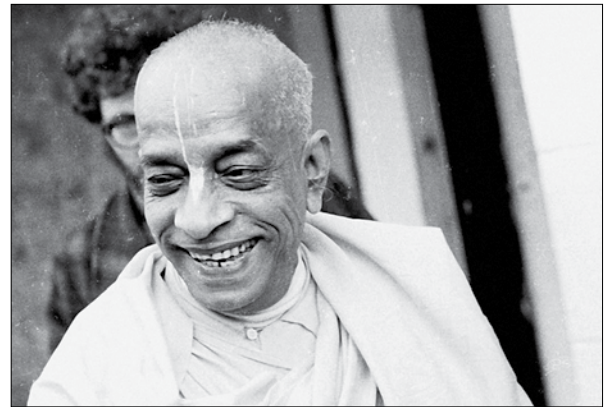


PLEASING KRISHNA PRACTICALLY

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Regarding your questions, your first question was: Should a devotee always speak the truth to everyone in all circumstances? The answer is yes. One should always speak the truth. But a qualified devotee will be able to speak the truth very palatably to everyone so that it will sound pleasing even to his enemy. That is the art of speaking the truth. We must speak the truth to all people, but how you say it is another thing, *satyaṁ bruyāt, priyaṁ bruyāt*. When you become a little more experienced in Krishna consciousness by preaching, and if you are sincere and serious to make progress in spiritual understanding, you need not have to worry yourself further, because the truth will always be spoken by you in the proper manner. Krishna will give you that intelligence; you need not be concerned for it. Simply try to please him always by your sincere service and chanting. That's all.

Of course, for doing business with businessmen you have to lie. Just like Krishna himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sometimes he also had to also fabricate something in emergency situations. Although he promised not to interfere in the battle of Kurukshetra, he was forced to break his promise just to save his pure devotee. So there is no prohibition that one shall never tell lie,



*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

because for business of carrying our propaganda work sometimes it may be necessary to lie. Krishna consciousness means practical living, not something utopian or idealistic and vague. We simply do the needful, whatever pleases Krishna most. That's all.

Gradually you will understand what it means to please Krishna and what it means to displease Krishna. That you will learn by studying our books and by yourself engaging in practical devotional service. In material dealings there is always something undesirable, but even so, you cannot give up your occupation. Just like fire is very pure, but still there is some smoke. You cannot avoid it. All these things can be rectified when the result is offered to Krishna. Otherwise, even though you may do very honest business, it has no utility whatsoever.

— Letter to Yajñeshwar, 2 January 1972. ॐ

Drawing by Ananta Sakti Das



PREACHING BOLDLY

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

Question: How should we preach to ordinary people?

Answer: Human beings carry a variety of diseases, and each needs to be treated individually. Unless the disease is properly diagnosed, proper treatment cannot be administered and the ailment will not be cured. A platform speaker cannot do much for most sick people. He can give only token relief. I have not found anyone sincerely interested in Krishna consciousness for forty years. Now, whoever comes to me is not interested in hearing *hari-kathā*. They are not ready to give up their dependence on their own education and intelligence. In this world, people like to become popular; they do not like to inquire about the Absolute Truth. Those who claim to be religious preachers are busy trying to protect their own existence by flattering others. By speaking and hearing the truth, one's popularity is unlikely to be enhanced. Therefore, we are not interested in the sympathy or support of ordinary people who are averse to the Lord.

Question: Should we boldly speak the truth?

Answer: Without cheating anyone we should boldly speak the truth to everyone. If the truth is bitter or unpopular but bestows blessings on the living entities, we must speak it. This will not ultimately cause them anxiety.

We ourselves should inquire about the Absolute Truth, and then we should try to understand how to help everyone else. Giving Krishna consciousness to others requires firm determination. Do not think

of saving only the people of the present age. Think of the people in all ages and all times. Teach about the most pleasant kingdom of Vaikuntha, the place from which no one ever returns to this material world. If you want to preach transcendence, it is vital that you yourself have taken shelter at the lotus feet of your spiritual master.

Always serve the spiritual master who imparts to you transcendental knowledge. Even if you live at home instead of in the *maṭha*, we should all serve him together. We should also maintain the Lord and his devotees in opulent houses with comfortable atmospheres, and we ourselves should live in ordinary cottages. If we feed Krishna nicely, rather than enjoying things for ourselves, we will attain his mercy. Always remember that everything belongs to Krishna. Our lives will become successful only when we use everything in this world in his service. However, before preaching these instructions we must live them.

Unless we speak the truth boldly we cannot please guru and Gaurāṅga. The more determined one is in devotional service, the bolder and more courageous he will be as a preacher.

If I fail to speak the impartial truth because I might become unpopular, I have certainly abandoned the path of my disciplic succession and accepted an unauthorized path. In the end I will either find myself cheated or will become an atheist.

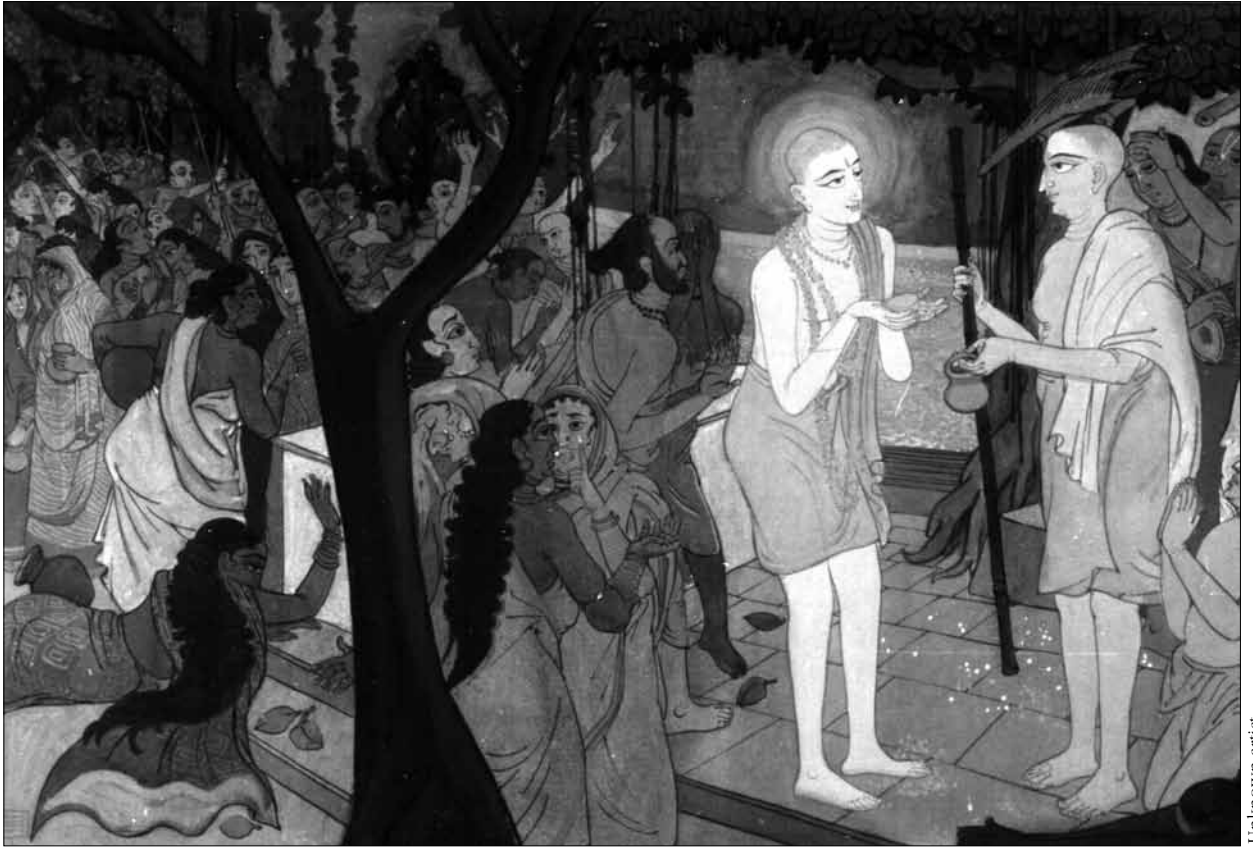
Question: Why were the *maṭhas* established?

Answer: The *maṭhas* were not established to favor ordinary people but to help pure devotees advance in spiritual life. We serve Lord Gaurāṅga simply by performing *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*. The *Bhāgavatam* verse (11.5.32) *yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ* supports this idea. The example set by Shri Krishna's Gaura pastimes is the only auspicious way to perfection for the *jīvas*.

The *maṭhas* have not been established to please *bhogīs* or *tyāgīs*. They have been established to preach pure devotional service. We receive blessings as we serve Hari by establishing *maṭhas*.

Our intention is not to collect one or two rupees to benefit the *maṭha*. We should not be eager to take help from unscrupulous people. Rather, if we can benefit anyone by speaking the bold truth, then the *maṭha's* purpose is served.

People will often play tricks on us. We should consider such tricks as the Lord's test. It is difficult



Unknown artist

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu takes sannyāsa from Keshava Bharati

to cross beyond insurmountable *māyā* unless we are greatly fortunate. *Māyāvādīs* and *bhogīs* are both conditioned souls. By the mercy of Krishna's devotees, persons who surrender to Hari can discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong. Know for certain that being drawn by the enjoying spirit, many people cannot realize the Absolute Truth.

Question: Should we glorify Hari constantly?

Answer: Mahaprabhu taught *kīrtanīya sadā hariḥ*, that we should always chant the holy name of Hari. The word "*sadā*" leaves no room for interruption. Human beings have no work or duty other than to glorify Hari. Hari should be glorified even to birds and animals. We do not care if the ignorant call us mad or fools. We will constantly propagate *hari-kathā* under the order and guidance of our spiritual master and Lord Gauranga.

In order to hear mundane topics, people read daily newspapers and remain ever absorbed in worldly matters. Our proposition is to let everyone hear about Chaitanya Mahaprabhu every day. Let them discuss Chaitanya whenever they meet one another, and let them survive on the strength of these topics. Let there be nothing else discussed in this world.

In order to keep the cultivation of Chaitanya and his instructions alive forever, we ourselves have to remain absorbed in *chaitanya-kathā*. At present, despite impediments put forth by materialists, we are spending large amounts of money to arrange for the constant glorification of Hari.

This world's senseless people suffer from a variety of *anarthas* and are intoxicated by material life. They are so intoxicated that they will do anything except to try to remedy their suffering. Instead, they use their time, money, and intelligence to hear mundane topics, thereby inviting their own ruination by worsening their diseased condition. It is as if they are eating improper food instead of healthy food. Finally, they will go to hell. But still they will not hear about Shri Chaitanya even a little. It is as if they have taken a vow to avoid the proper remedy. Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, Shri Chaitanya's devotees regularly propagate the message of Shri Chaitanya throughout the world. •

— From *Amṛta-vāṇī* — *Nectar of Instructions for Immortality*, Chapter 8. Touchstone Media. 2011.

SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS

Some Points from the Commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.15

Part Two: Spiritual Effulgence

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam
yad dhi paśyanti munayo guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ*

Lord Krishna revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious, and eternal. When the consciousness of sages is free from the modes of material nature they see that spiritual existence in trance. (Bhāg. 10.28.15)

Śrīla Sridhar Swami (Bhāvārtha-dīpikā)

Those who are covered with material bodies cannot see the spiritual world, and hence the Lord showed them his *brahman* form, which is devoid of any body. This is described in this verse starting with *satyam*.

Śrīla Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakura (Sārārtha-darśinī) —

- The impersonal feature of the Lord is unobstructed, intelligent, unlimited, uninterrupted, effulgent, and eternal. It is perceived by the *jñānīs* when they transcend the modes of material nature.
- The flame of a lamp looks more beautiful because it is situated in the middle of darkness. Even though Vrindavan is of the form of the bliss of *brahman*, its sweetness is greater than that derived from *brahman*



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A free bi-monthly service provided by:
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Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

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Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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because it is situated in the middle of the manifestation of *māyā*. Thus, while referring to the impersonal aspect of the Lord, the previous verse said that the Lord showed the cowherd men his abode that is beyond the material realm. It did not say that the abode is situated in the material realm, because that only applies to Vrindavan.

- Moreover, from the experience of the self-satisfied devotees headed by Srila Sukadev Goswami, it is understood that the personal feature of the Lord, which is always engaged in variegated pastimes, is far sweeter than the impersonal feature.

- Even though the body of the Lord is all-pervading, still he appears in a humanlike form with limited dimensions. Although the Lord's body is free from the six transformations (of birth, growth, staying, producing byproducts, dwindling, and death), the Lord takes birth, grows, and so on, just like an ordinary mortal. Even though the Lord's body is free from the faults of urges and so on, the Lord appears to feel hunger and thirst. He perspires, feels fear and bewilderment, and sometimes is injured by weapons in battle. All this is because of his inconceivable, unlimited potency.

- In the same way, even though Vrindavan pervades unlimited universes, as seen by Lord Brahma, still it appears to be limited. Vrindavan is eternal and free from faults, even though it contains humans, animals, birds, trees, and other living entities that experience hunger, thirst, birth, old age, and so on. Thus it is a shelter of unlimited wonders. (To be continued) ❧

— Translation by Bhakta Vinit from the Sanskrit given in *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-mahā-purāṇam with Multiple Commentaries*, Canto 10. Published by Shri Krishna Shankar Shastri, Sri Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Gujarat.

ETIQUETTE OF SPEAKING AND HEARING

Nārada Purāṇa 1.1.73-74

*naro yaḥ sat-kathā-madhye sambhāṣaṁ kurute 'nyataḥ
sa yāti narakam ghoram tad ekāgra-manā bhavet
śrotā vaktā ca vipreṇ drā eṣa dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ
asamāhita-cittas tu na jānāti hi kiñcana*

The man who during a narration of the Lord's pastimes talks about something else goes to a terrible hell. Thus, one should be mentally fixed [in his respective duty as either a speaker or listener]. O Brahmins! This is the eternal duty of both the listener and the speaker, for nothing can be understood with a wavering consciousness. ❧

— Translated from *Nārada Purāṇa*. Sanskrit with Hindi translation. Hindi. Sahitya Sammelan. 1989. Prayag.



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 294

Śrī Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī

06 February 2013

Circulation 6,180

Highlights

• RAGHUNATH DAS GOSWAMI'S EXAMPLE

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• DON'T SHOW DETACHMENT

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

• SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS — PART THREE

Some points from the commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.16

• ETERNAL RESIDENCE IN VRAJA

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami

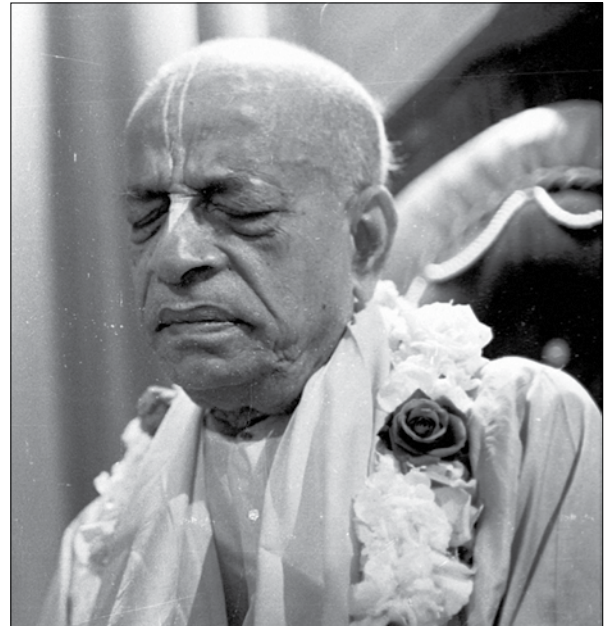


RAGHUNATH DAS GOSWAMI'S EXAMPLE

***His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada***

Raghunath Das Goswami's father's income was one hundred thousand rupees per month, and I have heard that sometimes for one rupee they were selling nine mounds of rice. In other words, Raghunath Das Goswami was the son of a very rich man. And he was the only son and he had a very beautiful wife. The father saw that his son was a little restless; he was very attracted to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement; he wants to join, so he'll run away from home. Let him have a very beautiful wife so that he may not go away. For a rich man to get a beautiful wife for his son is not very difficult. He got a beautiful wife and a special garden house, with guards, so that the son may not run away. This was the position of Raghunath Das Goswami. One day, Raghunath Das Goswami's mother was advising her husband, "Why don't you shackle him?" She was suggesting that, "Just like in a prison house the prisoners are locked up in iron chains, similarly you do for my son so that that he'll not be able to go away." The father replied, "You mad woman, don't you see I have given him such a nice wife as a shackle, and he's not attached. What will an iron shackle do?" (Lecture in Stockholm. 6 September 1973.)

Because we are accustomed to eating voraciously, in the beginning we should not try to artificially eat less.



*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

You should eat, but try to minimize. Therefore there is a prescription for fasting. There should be at least two compulsory fasting days in a month. And there are other fasting days as well. The more you can reduce your sleeping and eating you will keep good health, especially for spiritual purposes. But it is not done artificially. When you advance you will naturally not feel hunger, just like Raghunath Das Goswami. He was the son of a very rich man. He left home and joined Lord Chaitanya. He was the only son, a very beloved son.

He had a very nice wife. He left everything without telling anyone. His father could understand that he went to Lord Chaitanya in Puri. The father, being a very rich man, sent four servants along with four hundred rupees for Raghunath Das Goswami. Five hundred years ago, four hundred rupees means twenty times at the present value. At first he accepted, “Oh, father has sent. All right.” He was spending money by inviting all the *sannyāsīs* in Jagannath Puri. There were many in the renounced order, and every month he was offering a feast. After this happened a few times, Lord Chaitanya inquired from his secretary, Swarup Damodar, “Oh, nowadays I don’t get any invitation from Raghunath. What happened?”

“Oh, sir, he has stopped accepting his father’s money.” Lord Chaitanya said, “Oh, that’s very nice!” Raghunath Das thought, “I have renounced everything yet I am enjoying my father’s money. This is nonsense!” So he stopped accepting it. He told his father’s servants, “You go home. I don’t want money.” How was he living? He would stand by the staircase of the Jagannath Temple and when the priests went home with their *prasāda*, they would offer him something, for which he was satisfied.

When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard about that, he said, “Oh, this is very nice!” After a few days Raghunath Das Goswami also stopped standing by the temple staircase. Then Chaitanya Mahaprabhu inquired from his secretary, “I don’t see Raghunath standing there. What is he doing?”

“No, sir, he has given up standing there because he thought, ‘Oh, I’m standing here like a prostitute, hoping that someone will come and give me some *prasāda*. No, I don’t like it.’” “Oh, that’s very nice! Then how is he eating?” “He’s collecting some rejected rice in the kitchen and that he is eating.”

To encourage Raghunath Das Goswami, one day Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to his room. “Raghunath! I heard that you are eating very nice foodstuffs and you are not inviting me?” Raghunath did not reply. So Lord Chaitanya found out where he had kept that rice and he immediately began to eat.

Raghunath Das Goswami said, “Sir, do not eat. This is not fit for you.”

“Oh! It is Jagannath’s *prasāda*! How do you say it is not fit?” In this way Raghunath Das Goswami reduced his eating. Ultimately, every alternate day he would only take one small portion of buttermilk. And he



Unknown artist

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami

was bowing down hundreds of times and chanting so many times — *saṅkhyā-pūrvaka-nāma-gāna-natibhiḥ kālāvasānī-kṛtau*. [Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka 6] This is a very nice example of minimizing all material necessities up to the point of nil. But that is not possible for everyone. Don’t try to imitate Raghunath Das Goswami. Our business is not to imitate but to try to follow as far as possible. Not artificially. (Lecture in Los Angeles. 17 February 1969.) ❧

DON’T SHOW DETACHMENT

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told Raghunath Das Goswami, “Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Krishna will soon be pleased and deliver you from the clutches of *māyā*. That means that you should not become mad. Don’t develop monkey detachment, *markaṭa-vairāgya*. Monkeys are very fickle. They are jumping from one branch to another branch, from one tree to another tree.

Unknown artist



Monkey detachment means that one is not fixed. Mahaprabhu said this only to show people that they should not develop such monkey detachment. Mahaprabhu thereby taught Raghunath Das, “Krishna has given you so much material opulence. You should understand that it all belongs to Krishna. Don’t be attached to it. Develop only one attachment — to Krishna — and keep that hidden in your heart. Don’t express it, don’t expose it. Outwardly you should behave in an ordinary way, *antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra* [Cc. madhya 16.239]. In external dealings you should behave with your father, your mother, your wife, as necessary. They should not think that you are detached from them. No. You should behave in such a way they should think, “No, our son is very much attached to us.” But it should all be external, *bāhya*. Meanwhile, in the heart you are not attached. You are only attached to Krishna. You behave in that way. That is *yukta-vairāgya*.

Everything is there — family members are there, father and mother, kith and kin, wife, son, daughter, opulence, home, hearth — everything. You are surrounded with everything, but you are not attached to any of it. It is only external. In the heart you are only attached to Krishna. In this way you should behave,

and *acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra* — “within a very short time Krishna will deliver you from this deep dark well, *grhāndha-kūpaṁ*.” [Cc. madhya 16.239] You should always cry in the heart, “When will Krishna give me the opportunity to get out of this?” Krishna knows the heart. “Oh, he’s crying!” Then he will give you the opportunity to get out of the entanglement. This is *yukta-vairāgya*.

Otherwise, if you let them know that you are completely detached then a very hellish situation will be created in the home. If your wife understands, “Oh, my husband is not attached to me and some day he’ll leave me,” then she will create a hellish situation, great havoc. One should be very, very careful. Krishna knows the heart. When Krishna gives the opportunity, then you’ll be able to get out. ❀

— Lecture in France, 15 August 1994.

SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS

Some Points from the Commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.16

Part Three: Submerging the Cowherds in Brahman

*te tu brahma-hradam nītā magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhṛtāḥ
dadṛśuḥ brahmaṇo lokam yatrākṛūro ‘dhyagāt purā*

The cowherd men were brought by Lord Krishna to the Brahma-hrada, made to submerge in the water, and then come out. From the same vantage point that Akrura saw the spiritual world, the cowherd men saw the planet of the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Sridhar Swami (Bhāvārtha-dīpikā):

- The impersonal Brahman can be compared to a lake, because one who is submerged in it does not perceive any varieties. Krishna took the cowherd men to the lake of the impersonal Brahman, and they entered into it. Then he raised them from there, as if waking them from *samādhi*, deep meditation, and showed them his abode named Vaikuntha.

- Someone may question how it is that those who have merged in the *brahmajyoti* or who have gone to the spiritual realm could again have vision of this world? In response, it is said that earlier Akrura saw Krishna in the lake of Brahman effulgence at the place where the cowherd men entered the river. The idea is that there is nothing that is impossible for the Supreme Lord, who has inconceivable opulences. Thus he could take the cowherd men to the spiritual realm and again bring them back.

- Even though the incident where Akrura saw Krishna occurred after this incident with the cowherd men, still, past tense is used in this verse, as the incident took place before the conversation of Shukadev and Parikshit.

- The name of the lake in the Yamuna where Akrura saw Krishna is *brahma-hrada*. After being taken to that lake, the cowherd men saw the Vaikuntha planets. Then again, being taken out of the lake, they saw Krishna as before. Thus they became astonished.

- The term *brahma-hrada*, literally meaning 'lake of impersonal Brahman', can either be interpreted as the impersonal Brahman, which is comparable to a lake, or it can mean the spot in the Yamuna where Akrura entered and saw the Lord reclining on Ananta Shesh.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakura
(*Sārārtha-darśinī*):

- The impersonal feature of the Lord is like a lake, as one who is submerged in it does not have knowledge of varieties.

- When Krishna took the cowherd men to the lake of impersonal Brahman, all of them entered that lake and thus got merged into the impersonal Brahman. However, by his inconceivable potency, the Lord raised them from impersonal liberation to his Vaikuntha planets. It is confirmed in the second canto that the Lord took the cowherd men to the

Gokula planet in Vaikuntha — *lokam vikunṭham upaneṣyati gokulam sma* [Bhāg. 2.7.31]

- Just as persons who attain impersonal liberation are delivered from material existence, in the same way, the cowherd men who possessed love for the Lord saw Vaikuntha after being raised from the lake of impersonal liberation. The idea is that Vaikuntha is far better than the great obstacle of impersonal liberation, which includes destruction of everything.

- The love-filled happiness of Vaikuntha is superior to the happiness of impersonal Brahman, which is devoid of love. However, the love-filled happiness of Gokul is even superior to that of Vaikuntha. This philosophical truth has been illustrated here.

- Alternatively, *brahma-hrada* can refer to Vaikuntha where earlier Akrura had gone and where he saw the form of the Lord that he had desired to see. Even though Akrura saw Krishna at the *brahma* lake after the experience the cowherd men had there, still the past tense is used in this verse, as the incident took place before the conversation of Srila Shukadev and King Parikshit. ॐ

— Translation by Bhakta Vinit from the Sanskrit given in *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-mahā-purāṇam* with multiple commentaries, Canto 10. Published by Shri Krishna Shankar Shastri, Sri Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Gujarat.

ETERNAL RESIDENCE IN VRAJA

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami

*anyatra kṣaṇa-mātram acyuta-pure
premāmṛtāmbho-nidhi
snāto 'py acyuta-sajjanair api samam nāham
vasāmi kvacit
kintu atra vraja-vāsinām api samam yenāpi
kenāpy alam
samlāpāir mama nirbharah prati muhur vāso
'stu nityam mama*

May I not for even a moment stay in any other holy place of Lord Achyuta, even though that place may be submerged in an ocean of love of Godhead and be full of saintly devotees. Instead, may my residence be here eternally in Vraja, close to the *vraja-vāsīs*, no matter how much gossip or ordinary talk may go on. ॐ

— *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*, verse 105. Sanskrit taken from Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>).



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A free bi-monthly service provided by:
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Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 295

Śrī Bhaimī Ekādaśī

21 February 2013

Circulation 6,200

Highlights

• LORD NITYANANDA — OUR GURU

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• ETERNAL VARNASHRAM DHARMA

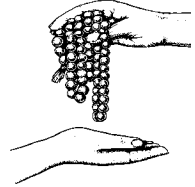
Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura

• SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS — PART THREE

Some points from the commentaries on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.17

• ALL GLORIES TO NAROTTAM DAS THAKURA

Govinda Das

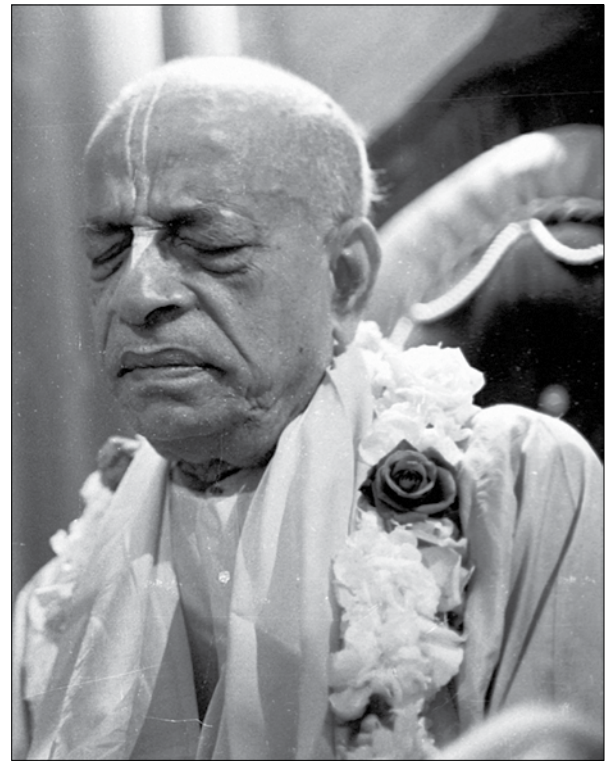


LORD NITYANANDA — OUR GURU

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The bona fide spiritual master always engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By this test he is known to be a direct manifestation of the Lord and a genuine representative of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. The real Vedic philosophy is *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, which establishes everything to be simultaneously one with and different from the Personality of Godhead. Srila Raghunath Das Goswami confirms that this is the real position of a bona fide spiritual master and says that one should always think of the spiritual master in terms of his intimate relationship with Mukunda (Sri Krishna). Srila Jiva Goswami, in his *Bhakti-sandarbha* (213), has clearly defined that a pure devotee's observation of the spiritual master and Lord Shiva as one with the Personality of Godhead exists in terms of their being very dear to the Lord, not identical with him in all respects. Following in the footsteps of Srila Raghunath Das Goswami and Srila Jiva Goswami, later *ācāryas* like Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur have confirmed the same truths. In his prayers to the spiritual master, Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur confirms that all the revealed scriptures accept the spiritual master to be identical with the Personality of Godhead because he is a very dear and confidential servant of



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

the Lord. *Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas* therefore worship Srila Gurudeva (the spiritual master) in the light of his being the servitor of the Personality of Godhead. In all the ancient literatures of devotional service and in the more recent songs of Srila Narottam Das Thakur, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, and other unalloyed *vaiṣṇavas*, the spiritual master is always considered either one of

Unknown artist



Sri Nityananda Prabhu

the confidential associates of Srimati Radharani or a manifested representation of Srila Nityananda Prabhu. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Ādi 1.46 purport.)

So far your questions are concerned: Nityananda is the principle of guru. So, *gurudeva* is the incarnation of Nityananda. Anyone strictly following the instruction of guru is following Nityananda. The price one has to pay if he wants to become Krishna conscious is that he must dedicate himself to following the order of the spiritual master, *mahat-sevā*. If the spiritual master is pleased with the disciple then the blessings of guru will be there. That is the best way to become Krishna conscious, and Krishna is non-different from Nityananda. You may pray to Lord Nityananda to help you become dedicated in the service of your guru. Krishna consciousness cannot be achieved artificially. You should approach Nityananda Prabhu through your spiritual master. (Letter, 24 October 1976.) ❧

ETERNAL VARNASHRAM DHARMA

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35) it is stated:
yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

If one shows the symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.

In his commentary, Sridhar Swami has written:

śamādhībhir eva brāhmaṇādi vyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jāti mātṛād ity āha—yasyeti. yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaraṁ tenaiva lakṣaṇa nimittenaiva varṇena vinirdiśet, na tu jāti nimittenety arthaḥ

The brahmins' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as brahmins, then such persons should be considered brahmins. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth.

This kind of eternal *varṇāśrama-dharma* is always to be followed. It is often useful for devotional service. Members of the four *varṇas* and the lower castes should be eager to progress their *sāttvic* nature. If an outcaste becomes fortunate due to his pious deeds, then he should progress his cultivation of goodness while following the conduct of a *śūdra*. Everyone should give prominence to devotional service and progress the cultivation of goodness to the platform of *nirguṇa*, transcendence, by the mercy of the devotees. These are the stages of *sanātana-dharma*. With devotion, the member of any *varṇa* is considered the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. But without devotion, the life of a *brāhmaṇa* fixed in goodness is useless.

For example, let us consider the statement [of Srila Narottam Das Thakur from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*]: *mahājanera yei patha, tā 'te ha'ba anurata, pūrvāpara kariyā vicāra* — “I will be attached to following the path chalked out by the *mahājanas*. I will consider their example very carefully from all angles of vision.” The *ṛṣis* and *mahātmās* who have taught conduct before the appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are considered to be the previous *mahājanas*. The conduct seen in the *mahājanas* after the appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the conduct of later *mahājanas*. The conduct of the later *mahājanas* is superior and should be adopted. The conduct of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his followers is meant to teach people. That conduct should be followed in all respects. ❧

— *Śrī Bhakti-yāloka - Illuminations on Bhakti*. Published by Torchlight Publications, 2002.



Muralikā-asara — "The captive influence of the flute"

SHOWING GOLOKA TO THE VRAJA-VASIS

*Some Points from the Commentaries on
Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.28.17*

Part Four: Submerged in the Greatest Joy

*nandādayas tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā paramānanda-nivṛtāḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ ca tatra cchandobhiḥ stūyamānaṁ su-vismīṭāḥ*

Nanda Maharaja and the other cowherd men felt the greatest happiness when they saw that transcendental abode. They were especially amazed to see Krishna himself there, surrounded by the personified Vedas, who were offering him prayers.

Srila Sanatan Goswami (Bṛhat-vaiṣṇava-toṣiṇī):

First Interpretation — The cowherd men became extremely happy by the vision of Krishna's special abode, which they had desired to see. They became astonished to see that Krishna was present even there, in *vaikuṇṭha*.

Second Interpretation — The cowherd men became extremely happy by the vision of

Krishna's special abode which they had desired to see. They saw that Krishna was being praised in that abode of Vaikuntha/Golok with Vedic hymns. Seeing that he was also being praised next to them (in the earthly Vrindavan), they became greatly astonished. This has already been explained by Srila Sridhar Swami.

Third Interpretation — Eagerly seeing Vaikuntha, all the cowherd men became joyful. Krishna's dearest devotees headed by Nanda were astonished to see Krishna being glorified by Vedic hymns in Vaikuntha. However, their joy was only due to seeing Krishna near them again, as their supreme friend and the master of their lives. Seeing Vaikuntha itself was not the cause of their great happiness.

Fourth Interpretation — Even though Krishna was being praised with Vedic hymns in Vaikuntha, the cowherd men saw that he was also present with them. Thus they became greatly pleased and their faces became decorated with beautiful smiles (*suvismitāḥ*).

Fifth Interpretation — The cowherd men became supremely happy seeing their most dear Krishna being glorified in Vaikuntha with Vedic hymns.

Sixth Interpretation — Seeing that Golok has the same appearance as the Gokul on earth, the cowherds became supremely happy. ❧

— Translation by Bhakta Vinit from the Sanskrit given in *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-mahā-purāṇam* with multiple commentaries, Canto 10. Shri Krishna Shankar Shastri, Sri Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Gujarat.

ALL GLORIES TO NAROTTAM DAS THAKUR

Govinda Das

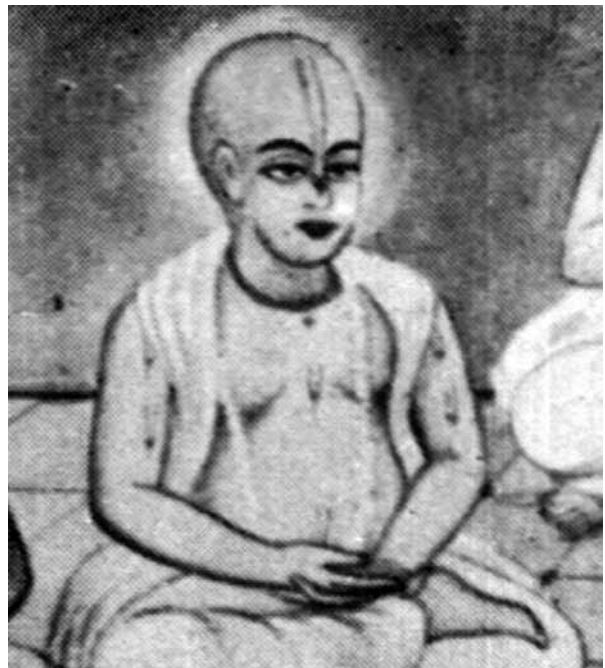
*jaya re jaya re jaya thākura narottama
prema-bhakati maharāja
yāko mantri abhinna kalevara
rāmacandra kavirāja (refrain)*

All glories, all glories to Thakur Narottam, the emperor of *prema-bhakti*! His minister Ramchandra Kaviraj is like his second body.

*prema-mukūṭa-maṇi bhūṣaṇa bhāvāvali
aṅga hi aṅga virāja
nṛpa āsana kheturi mātā baiṭhata
saṅga hi bhakata samāja*

Every limb of his body is ornamented with multifarious symptoms of the crest-jewels of *prema*. In the great festival at Kheturi, he sat on a grand *āsana* in the society of devotees.

*samātana rūpakṛta grantha bhāgavata
anudina karata vicāra
rādhā mādhaba yugala ujjala rasa
paramānanda sukhasāra*



Unknown artist

Srila Narottam Das Thakur

His daily practice was to carefully ponder over the books of Srila Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis, which reveal the topmost conjugal mellow of Sri Radha Madhava and are the subject matter of the topmost happiness.

*śrī saṅkīrtana viśaya-rase unmata
dharmādharma nāhi māna
yoga-dāna-vrata ādi bhaye bhāgata
royata karama geyāna*

He was completely absorbed in the ecstasies of *saṅkīrtana-rasa*. He did not care about so called religion or irreligion. Mystic yoga, charity, penance, etc., would run away and *karma-kāṇḍa* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* would shed tears.

*bhāgavata sāstra-gaṇa yā dei bhakati-dhana
tāka gaurava karu āpa
sāṅkhyā mīmāṃsaka tarkādika yata
kampita dekhi paratāpa*

He took pride in devotional literatures that bestow the treasure of *bhakti*. Seeing his might, *sāṅkhyā*, *mīmāṃsā*, logic, and other philosophies trembled.

*abhakata caura dūrahin bhāgi rahu
niyare nāhi parakāśa
dīna hīna jane deyala bhakati-dhane
vañcita govinda-dāsa*

The non-devotee thieves ran far away, and never came near him. He gave the treasure of *bhakti* even to the most fallen, but Govinda Das has been cheated. ❧

— Translated from *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, fourth edition, April 2010. Compiled and edited by Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay. Published by Shishu Sahitya Sansad Pvt. Ltd. Kolkata.

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 296

Śrī Vijayā Ekādaśī

08 March 2013

Circulation 6,250

Highlights

- **THE GLORIES OF SRI ISHWAR PURI**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **LAYING THE FOUNDATION**

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami

- **THREE TYPES OF DRAMA PLOTS**

From Srila Rupa Goswami's Nāṭaka-candrikā

- **DEVOTIONAL GEMS BY SRI ISHWAR PURI**

From Srila Rupa Goswami's Padyāvalī



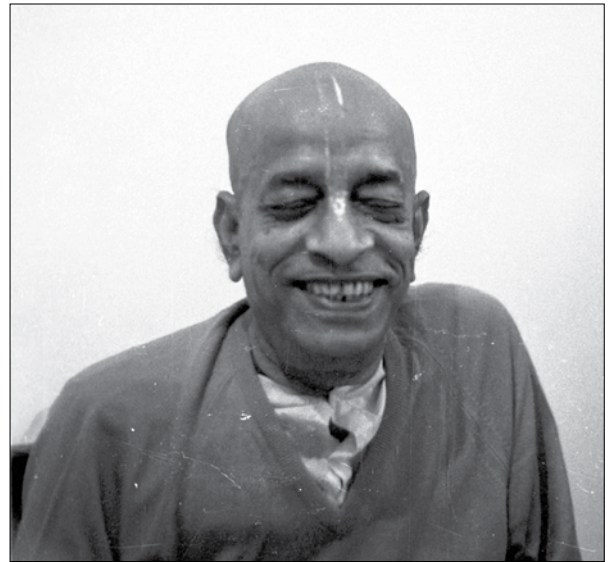
THE GLORIES OF SRI ISHWAR PURI

***His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada***

Ishwar Puri, the spiritual master of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, performed service to Madhavendra Puri, cleaning up his stool and urine with his own hand. Ishwar Puri was always chanting the holy name and pastimes of Lord Krishna for Madhavendra Puri to hear. In this way he helped Madhavendra Puri remember the holy name and pastimes of Lord Krishna at the time of death. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *antya* 8.28-29.)

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya asked Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu why Ishwar Puri accepted a disciple from a *śūdra* family. According to the *smṛti-śāstra*, which gives directions for the management of the *varṇāśrama* institution, a Brahmin cannot accept a disciple from the lower castes. In other words, a *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra* cannot be accepted as a servant. If a spiritual master accepts such a person, he is contaminated. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya therefore asked why Ishwar Puri accepted a servant or disciple born of a *śūdra* family.

In answer to this, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied that his spiritual master, Ishwar Puri, was so empowered that he was as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As such, Ishwar Puri was the spiritual master of the whole world. He was not a servant to any mundane rule or regulation.



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

An empowered spiritual master like Ishwar Puri can bestow his mercy upon anyone, irrespective of caste or creed. The conclusion is that an empowered spiritual master is authorized by Krishna and should be considered to be as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself. That is the verdict of Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti — *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstraiḥ*. An authorized spiritual master is as good as Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If Hari is free to act as he likes, the empowered spiritual master is also free. As Hari is not subject to the criticism of mundane rules and regulations,

Unknown artist



Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu getting initiated by Ishwara Puri in Gaya

the spiritual master empowered by him is also not subjected. According to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (antya 7.11) *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana* — an authorized spiritual master empowered by Krishna can spread the glories of the holy name of the Lord, for he has power of attorney from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the mundane world, anyone possessing his master's power of attorney can act on behalf of his master. Similarly, a spiritual master empowered by Krishna through his bona fide spiritual master should be considered as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself. (Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta madhya* 10.136-137.)

It is the custom amongst the Hindus to offer oblations at Gaya after the death of the father. There is a Vishnu temple there where they offer *prasādam*. This is a Hindu custom. The father and forefathers are offered that *prasādam*. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to perform that ceremony and by chance he met Ishwar Puri, and he was initiated by him. After coming back from Gaya, he became very emotional for Krishna, and sometimes people thought that he had become crazy. So his mother treated him with some Ayurvedic oil. But learned

devotees said that his condition was devotional emotion. His initiation was in Gaya, when he went to perform that ceremony, and he became emotional chanting Hare Krishna after initiation. (Play narration, 4 August 1969.) ॐ

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami

An *ācārya* like Srila Prabhupada teaches according to time, place and circumstance. People can understand only according to their consciousness. Neophytes cannot comprehend higher things, subtle philosophy. Just speak to them according to their capacity and let them make advancement. When the time comes, then all the subtle points will come out. An *ācārya* teaches like that. You should not think that there is some hard and fast rule as to what they must explain in the beginning. You should try to understand Srila Prabhupada's purpose. Following the orders of his revered spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, our Prabhupada went to the Western world, the country of *mlecchas* and *yavanas*. The people there have very low consciousness. *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy, Mahaprabhu's philosophy, is the highest,

most sublime philosophy. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is post-graduate study. It is difficult for Western people to understand. Therefore, Prabhupada stressed, “You first chant ‘*hare kṛṣṇa*’. Let your consciousness be purified. Hear the transcendental sound vibration.”

Buddhadeva is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, but he blasphemed the Vedas. He is the origin of the Vedas, so why will he speak like that? Because at the time it was needed. The people were indiscriminately killing animals for sacrifice. If you would ask them, “Why are you killing?” they would say, “The Vedas say we should.” But they could not understand the purport of the Vedas. They were in the mode of ignorance. How could they understand? Unless one comes to the level of *sattva-guṇa*, mode of goodness, one cannot understand what the Vedas say. At that time it was needed for Buddhadev to teach people to stop following the Vedas. He told them to give up indiscriminate killing of animals. In that way they could elevate themselves to the mode of goodness. Then they would be able to understand. At that time it was needed. But Buddha’s followers cannot understand the real reason why he did so.

Similarly, you cannot understand why Prabhupada said what he did. *Tat-kālīka*—at that time it was needed. But not for all time. He was laying the foundation. Before building a mansion you should lay the foundation, and the foundation should be very strong. Then you will be able to build a big mansion, skyscraper. If the foundation is not strong the skyscraper will collapse. Prabhupada laid the foundation. Then he left it for you: “Now you build a mansion.” That time has now come. Don’t stay in the foundation only. Now a mansion should be built. This is gradual development.

Buddhadev came and did this thing. He criticized the Vedas and the people became atheists. Then when the Vedas were about to be lost, Lord Narayan ordered Lord Shiva, who is *mahā-balī*, very powerful: “Shiva, you go and establish the Vedas!” Then Lord Shiva came in the form of Shankaracharya. It is all mentioned in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Shankara was not at fault. His master ordered him, so he preached this *māyāvāda*

philosophy. It was needed at the time. When you establish something, you first start from the lower and then go to the higher part. You cannot all of a sudden establish the higher part. Shankara established the lower part of the Vedas, *karma-kāṇḍa*, *jñāna-kāṇḍa* section, which is *gauṇa*, secondary. Shankara laid the foundation. Therefore Mahaprabhu has accepted Shankara as *ācārya* because he did the work of an *ācārya*. Mahaprabhu said, “Shankara has helped us. He has laid the foundation. Now I have to build the mansion.” This was the need at that particular time.

That is what an *ācārya* does, and in the same way Srila Prabhupada did the work of an *ācārya*. Fools and rascals criticize him. I say they cannot understand Srila Prabhupada. They can’t understand what he has done. He has done what was needed at that particular time. He has laid the foundation. Now the time

has come, we have to build the mansion. These fools cannot understand Krishna. They are committing a great offense at the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada — leaving ISKCON, joining another camp, and criticizing ISKCON’s teachings, Srila Prabhupada’s teachings. Nonsense! I get so much pain in my heart from this. Such rascals will definitely go to hell. So I have taken up this task — now the time has come we’ll teach all this higher philosophy. Prabhupada left it in a seed form. Now that seed should be fructified, and a big tree will come out. That is our duty. Prabhupada was teaching Westerners — *mlecchas* and *yavanas* eating beef and drinking liquor. They were hippies, mad fellows taking strong drugs, LSD and marijuana. What they can understand of this philosophy? He did what was needed for them at that particular time. He did a great job and brought us to the path. Otherwise so many persons would not have come here. But now the time has come to understand this philosophy. ❧

— Chapter 12. My Revered Spiritual Master. Gopal Jiu Publications.

THREE TYPES OF DRAMA PLOTS

From Srila Rupa Goswami’s Nāṭaka-candrikā

*itivṛttāṇi bhavet khyātāṇi kṛptāṇi miśraṇi iti tridhā
śāstra-prasiddhāṇi khyātāṇi syāt kṛptāṇi kavi-vinirmitāṇi
tayoh saṅkulatā miśraṇi kṛptāṇi varjyaṇi tu nāṭake*



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

yaduktam —

*nāṭakam khyāta-vṛttam syāt kṛpta-vṛttā tu nāṭikā
ihāmṛgo miśra-vṛtta iti nāṭyāṅga-bhāṣitam*

The *itivṛtta*, plot, of a drama may be classified as one of three types — *khyāta*, *kṛpta* and *miśra*. *Khyāta* is a drama based purely on scriptures. *Kṛpta* is a drama invented by the poet. The mixture of these two is known as *miśra*. *Kṛpta* is disallowed in the category of drama known as *nāṭaka*. [Nāṭaka means both general drama and also a specific type of drama that is exclusively based on the śāstra.]

Just like it is said: The performance named *nāṭaka* is a narration of the *khyāta* category. The performance named *nāṭikā* is of the *kṛpta* category, whereas the theatrical performance named *ihāmṛga* belongs to the *miśra* category. ❀

— Verses 13-14. Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com)

DEVOTIONAL GEMS BY SRI ISHWAR PURI

From Srila Rupa Goswami's Padyāvalī

*yoga-śruty-upapatti-nirjana-vana-
dhyānādhva-sambhāṇita
svārājyaṁ pratipadya nirbhayaṁ amī
muktā bhavantu dvijāḥ
asmākaṁ tu kadamba-kuñja-kuhara-
pranmīlad-indīvara-
śreṇī-śyāmala-dhāma-nāma juṣatām
janmāstu lakṣāvadhī*

❀

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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Let the twice-born enter the fearless kingdom of yoga, Vedic study, and solitary meditation in the forest. Let them become liberated in that way. As for us, we will spend hundreds of thousands of births chanting the holy name of Lord Krishna, whose splendid dark complexion and yellow garments are like a host of blue lotus flowers blooming in a grove of yellow-flower-bearing kadamba trees. (Text 18)

*nṛtyan vāyu-vighūrṇitaiḥ sva-viṭapair
gāyann alināṁ rutair
muñcann aśru maranda-bindubhir alam
romāñca-vānāṅkuraiḥ
mākando 'pi mukunda mūrcchati tava
smṛtyā nu vṛndāvane
brūhi prāṇa-samāna cetasi katham
nāmāpi nāyāti te*

Dancing, as its branches sway in the wind; singing through the sweet cries of the bees; crying through the nectar drops dripping from it; and shivering in ecstasy through the newly formed sprouts — this mango tree in Vrindavan faints thinking of you. Now tell us, O Mukunda! Why does the chanting of your name not bring about the same condition in us? (62)

*dhanyānāṁ hr̥di bhāsatāṁ girivara-
pratyagra-kuñjaukasāṁ
satyānanda-rasaṁ vikāra-vibhava-
vyāvṛttam antar-mahaḥ
asmākaṁ kila ballavī-rati-raso
vṛndāḍavī-lālaso
gopaḥ ko 'pi mahendranīla-ruciraś
citte muhuḥ kṛḍatu*

The fortunate ones staying in the spotless caves of the topmost mountain (Himalaya) experiencing a truly ecstatic flow of great happiness within their hearts [may continue to do so]. In our hearts, however, let he who is the enjoyer of the mellows of *gopī-prema*, and who is in love with Vrindavan — let that cowherd boy of the hue of a great *indranīla* gem, sport at every moment. (75) ❀

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com)





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 297

Śrī Āmalakī-vrata Ekādaśī

23 March 2013

Circulation 6,270

Highlights

• CHURCHIANITY

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• ALL ALPHABETS IN SERVICE OF GAURA

From Sri Raghunandan Goswami's Gaurāṅga-virudāvalī

• A DARK FORM AND A FAIR FORM BECOME ONE

The Medieval Poet Madhavi Das



CHURCHIANITY

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada, sometimes you say that only a very small percentage of people can take to Krishna consciousness.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Devotee: But yesterday morning in your lecture you were saying it can expand to ten thousand, a million, or ten million.

Prabhupada: Yes. By taking the proper course it can be increased.

Devotee: Is that just up to our preaching?

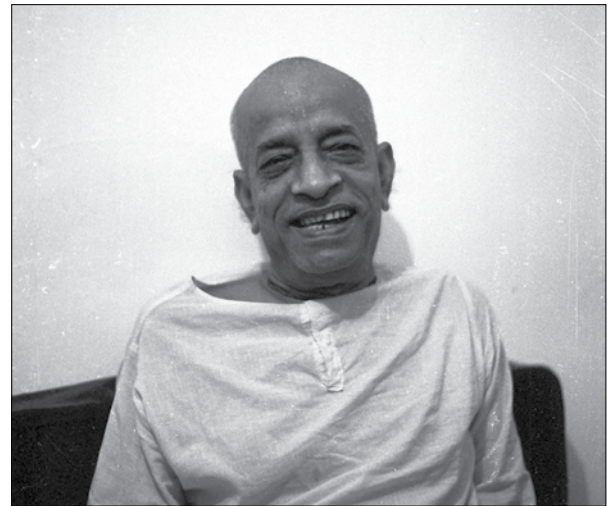
Prabhupada: Yes. That will depend on your purified preaching activities. If you again become materially victimized, then you cannot do it. But if you try, if you remain on the spiritual platform, then it will increase — *ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*. As soon as there is any contemplation of sense gratification, the spirit will be lost. Instead of Christianity it will become “Churchianity” — doing nothing, only officially going to the church. Then, gradually, no one will go. ❧
— From a morning walk in Mayapur. 7 April 1975.

ALL ALPHABETS IN SERVICE OF GAURA

*From Sri Raghunandan Goswami's
Gaurāṅga-virudāvalī*

In this composition, Lord Gaura is glorified using all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet in order.

*adbhuta guṇa-jaya
āhita kali bhaya*



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

*iṣṭa janāvakā
īśvara sevaka*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[अ/a] — who has wonderful qualities;

[आ/ā] — who awards fearlessness even to *kali-yuga* personified;

[इ/i] — who is the protector of his near and dear ones;

[ई/ī] — and who is the servant of Sri Ishwar Puri.

*uddhaṭa daṇḍana
ūḍha sumañḍana
ṛju jana saṁśrita
ṛṣi gaṇa stuta*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[उ/u] — who chastises the unruly;

[ऊ/ū] — who wears exquisite ornaments;

[ऋ/ṛ] — who is the shelter of the simple-hearted;
[ॠ/ṝ] — and who is worshiped by the sages.

*!d-iva ṛtām iva
!!vad asādhita
ejita durjana
aiśya niketana*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[ऌ/ḷ] — who sometimes exhibits his *ṛta* —
honest, truthful and enlightened nature, just like
the letter *!* sometimes grammatically exhibits *ṛta*
nature (the nature of the letter *ṛ*);

[ॡ/ḹ] — who cannot be attained by material
endeavors, just like the elongated *!!* cannot be
pronounced by the material senses;

[ॢ/ḹ] — who causes the rascals to tremble;

[ॣ/ai] — and who is the repository of all prosperity.

*oḍra sadṛg adhara
aujvalyākara
amśuka bhūṣaṇa
astaga dūṣaṇa*

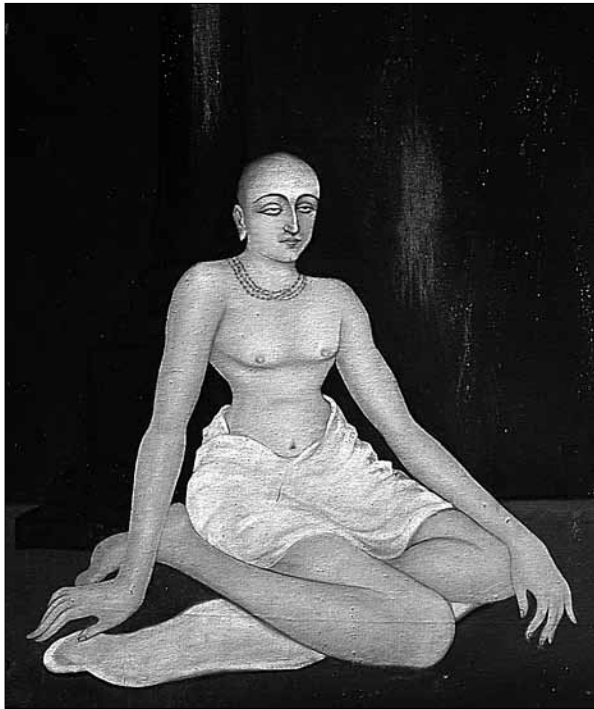
All glories to Lord Gaura —

[ओ/ō] — who has lips like an *oḍra* (*kusuma*)
flower;

[औ/au] — who is the mine (*ākara*) of *ujjvala-rasa*;

[अ/āṇ] — who wears fine decorated cloth;

[अः/ah] — and who ends all criticism.



Mahaprabhu in the Gambhira at Puri

*kanaka sama prabha
khala jana durlabha
gaṇanā virahita
ghana kaca vilasita*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[क/ka] — who has a golden bodily complexion;

[ख/kha] — who is difficult for rascals to attain;

[ग/ga] — who isn't counted as an incarnation
(due to being a hidden incarnation);

[घ/gha] — and who has beautiful blackish dark hair.

*ṇuti jita kokila
cūḍita vica kila
chalita kamala mada
jagati priyaka pada*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[ङ/ṅa] — whose sweet voice puts the cuckoo
to shame;

[च/ca] — who is decorated with various jasmine
flowers;

[छ/cha] — who defeats the beauty of the lotus,
thus destroying its pride;

[ज/ja] — and whose lotus feet are dear to the
entire world.

*jhanad iti nūpura
ñoṇuyā padakara
ḷikana nistala
ṭha jayi nakhāṅcala*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[झ/jha] — who sounds his ankle bells;

[ञ/ña] — who thus creates a sweet sound while
displaying his dancing steps;

[ट/ṭa] — who appeared to elaborately describe
the glories of the holy name;

[ठ/ṭha] — and whose toenails conquer the beauty
of the moon.

*ḍamaru dhṛg īśvara
ḍhuṇḍya kṛpā bhara
ṇātmaka vighraha
tattva vidāgraha*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[ड/ḍa] — who is the master of Lord Shiva, the
holder of the *ḍamaru*;

[ढ/ḍha] — whose mercy is always sought by
everyone;

[ण/ṇa] — who has a form full of eternal joy;

[त/ta] — and who bestowed mercy on the
tattva-vādīs.



Unknown artist

Nimai Pandit and his teacher Gangadas Pandit

*thūt kṛta muktika
dara pada bhaktika
dharma hṛdādara
narma rasākara*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[थ/tha] — who causes impersonal liberation to be spat upon

[ढ/da] — by one who has even a small fraction of devotion to his feet;

[ध/dha] — who creates fear in the transgressors of religious principles;

[न/na] — and who is the reservoir of *mādhurya-rasa*.

*padma vijayi kara
phulla kamala dhara
bandha vimocana
bhāskara rocana*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[प/pa] — who has hands that conquer the beauty of lotus flowers;

[फ/pha] — who holds a lotus in his lotus hands;

[ब/ba] — who relieves one of all bondage;

[भ/bha] — and who has sun-like radiant eyes.

*madhura tarānana
yama jayi sevana*

*rasa bhara dāyaka
lalita vidhāyaka*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[म/ma] — whose lotus face is very beautiful;

[य/ya] — whose service causes victory over Yamaraj;

[र/ra] — who bestows abundant *rasa*;

[ल/la] — and who bestows one's desired goal.

*valad anupama daya
śamita bhuvana bhaya
śad-bhuja vikṣaka
sanmata śikṣaka*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[व/va] — who bestows unparalleled mercy;

[श/śa] — who extinguishes the fear of the three worlds;

[ष/ṣa] — who demonstrates a six-handed form;

[स/sa] — and who teaches the true path.

*hari guṇa kathanaiḥ
kṣaṇa nandita jana
deva!*

All glories to Lord Gaura —

[ह/ha] — who through his speaking of *hari-kathā*
[क्ष/ṣa] — delights everyone.

O my Lord! ॐ

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the edition published by
Sri Haridas Shastri, Kalidah, Vrindavan. Gaurabda 498.

A DARK FORM AND A FAIR FORM BECOME ONE

The Medieval Poet Madhavi Das

*Note: Some songbooks give the poet Kaviranjan
as the author of this song.*

(*Bālā-rāga*)

*śyāmera gaura-varaṇa eka deha
pāmara-jana ithe kara-i sandeha*

A dark form and a fair form are now manifest in
one body. The fools and sinners are filled with doubt.

*saṛabhe āgora mūrati rasa sāra
pākala bhena yaiche phala sahakāra*

That form is filled with a sweet fragrance. It is
fragrant like a tree bearing ripe mangoes.

*gopa-janama punaḥ dvija avatāra
nigama nā pāya-i nigūḍha vihāra*

In his previous birth he was a gopa. Now he
descends to this world as a brahmin. Even the
scriptures cannot touch his secret pastimes.

*prakaṣa karala hari-nāma-vākhāna
nārī puruṣa mukhe nā śuniye āna*

ॐ

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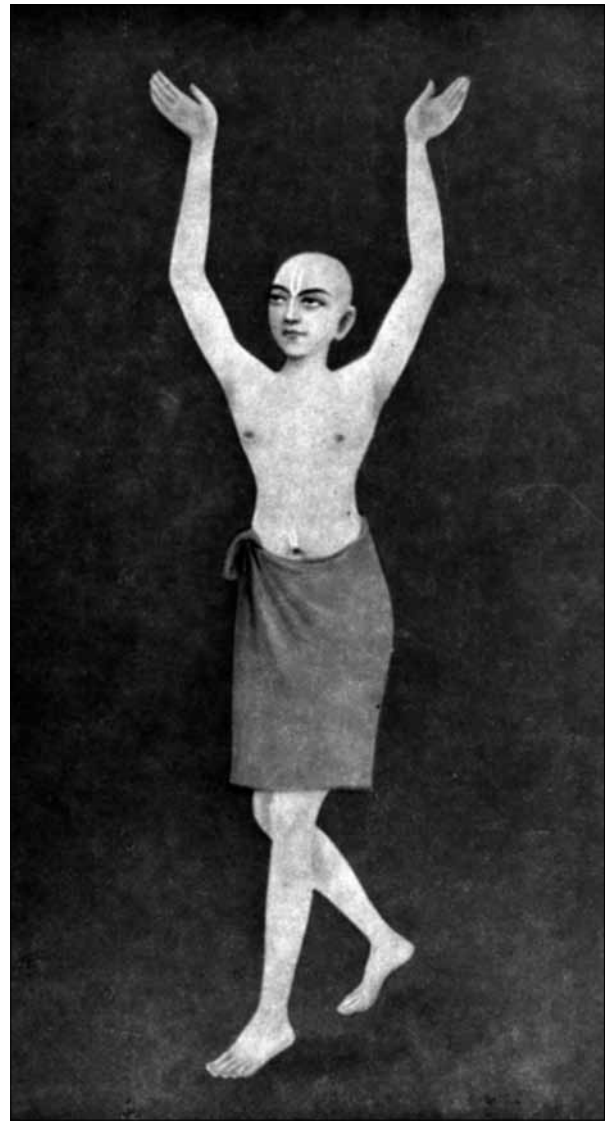
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Unknown artist

He openly preaches the glories of chanting
Krishna's holy names. Now these names alone and
nothing else is heard from the mouths of the men
and women of this world.

*kari gaura-caraṇa kamala madhu pāna
sarasa saṅgīta mādhaṇī dāsa bhāṇa*

Tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Lord
Gauranga, Madhavi Das sings this sweet song. ॐ

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Kusakratha Das. Unpublished.

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

No. 298

Śrī Pāpa-mocanī Ekādaśī

6 April 2013

Circulation 6,290

Highlights

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• WHAT KRISHNA THOUGHT BEFORE APPEARING AS GAURANGA

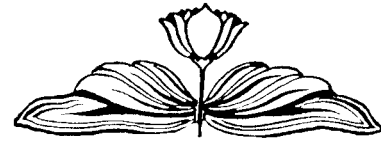
Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

• IN WHATEVER BIRTH I TAKE ...

Pāṇḍava-gītā

• INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD-GITA

Sripada Ramanujacharya



SNAKES WITH FANGS REMOVED

***His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada***

In his early life, Bilvamangal Thakur was an impersonalistic monist, and he used to meditate upon the impersonal Brahman effulgence. Later, he became a devotee of Lord Krishna. Sometimes a devotee gradually comes to the stage of *bhagavān* realization, realization of the supreme person, after having attained the lower stages of realization — impersonal *brahman* realization and localized *paramātmā* realization. The condition of such a devotee is described in the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (5) by Prabodhananda Saraswati:

*kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate
durdāntendriya-kāla-sarpa-paṭali prokṣhāta-damīṣṭrāyate
viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhāyate vidhi-mahendrādiś ca kīṭāyate
yat-kārunya-kaṭākṣa-vaiḥbhava-vatāṁ taṁ gaurāṁ exa śumaha*

Kaivalya, the state of oneness with the effulgence of *brahman*, appears hellish to the devotee. Also, the heavenly planets, which are the abodes of the demigods, appear to a devotee like phantasmagorias. The *yogis* meditate in order to achieve control of their senses, but for the devotee the senses appear like serpents with broken teeth. The devotee doesn't have to endeavor to control his senses because they are already engaged in the Lord's service. Consequently there is no possibility that the senses will act like serpents. In the material condition, the senses are as strong as



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

poisonous snakes. But when the senses are engaged in the Lord's service, they are like poisonous snakes with their fangs removed — they are no longer dangerous. (Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, madhya 10.177) ❀

WHAT KRISHNA THOUGHT BEFORE APPEARING AS GAURANGA

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Krishna came 5,000 years ago in *Dvāparā-yuga* and manifested his transcendental pastimes. In his *kurukṣetra-līlā* he was the charioteer of Arjuna, and on that battlefield he spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*. One should not think that Krishna spoke the *Bhagavad-*

gītā only to Arjuna. It was for all humanity. He gave confidential, more confidential, and most confidential instructions to Arjuna. Then he finished his *līlā* in this material world and went back to his own abode, Goloka Vrindavan. There, Krishna was thinking, “I appeared in the material world; speaking to Arjuna, I gave such nice instructions for all humanity.” What are the most confidential instructions of Krishna in *Bhagavad-gītā*?

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mān namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo 'si me*

“Worship me, pay your obeisances unto me, then surely you will come to me — there is no doubt.” This is a most confidential instruction. Krishna spoke this verse at the end of the 9th chapter [text 34], and again he repeated it at the end of the 18th chapter [text 65]. It is so important and confidential.

Then,

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Give up all varieties of religion and just surrender unto me.” This is Krishna’s concluding instruction at the end of the 18th chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. These are his most confidential instructions. While in his abode, Krishna was thinking that after *Dvāpara-yuga*, *Kali-yuga* would be coming. *Kali* is the worst *yuga* because *pāpa*, sin, is prominent. In *Kali-yuga* the people are very, very degraded. Their consciousness is very, very low. Krishna knows everything, and he is the only well-wishing friend of the living entities, so he was thinking, “I spoke everything in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Speaking to Arjuna, I gave the most confidential instructions for all humanity. But can the people of *Kali-yuga* understand these instructions?”

When Krishna said, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* — “Give up all varieties of religion and just surrender unto me.” — why will one surrender unto him? Because he is *rasa-maya-mūrti*, the embodiment of *rasa*. He is amorous love personified. We *jīvas* want to taste *rasa* because we are the eternal fragmental parts and parcels of that *rasa-maya-mūrti*, Krishna. That is why Krishna said *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*.

But later, in his abode, he was thinking, “Can the people of *Kali-yuga* understand these loving affairs

just by my mere words?” Krishna said, “If someone is fortunate enough to understand, to realize this, then *mām evaiśyasi*, he can come to me.” Otherwise it is not possible to approach Krishna. Krishna said, *prati-jāne priyo 'si me* — “You are my very dear friend, Arjuna, so I can tell you this confidential instruction.” But Krishna was later thinking, “How many people of this *Kali-yuga* can understand? I think no one can understand because they are conditioned souls, *māyā-baddha-jīvas*. They always think themselves the body. They don’t know about the soul.”

To say, “I am a spirit soul,” is only speaking theoretically. It is not practical. We cannot understand. But when you chant Hare Krishna and make some advancement on this spiritual path, then you can understand. It is not theoretical. It is very practical. So Krishna was thinking, “How many of these people of *Kali-yuga* can understand this truth? They are conditioned souls. They are always hankering after their own sense gratification and material happiness. They don’t know that there is anything other than material pleasure. They don’t have any knowledge of it. They have no taste for it. They cannot put faith in my words because they only know the happiness of material sense gratification. What should be done? I have only spoken theoretically. I have not given any example.” There is a very nice saying in English, “Example is better than precept.” “I gave only precept. I have not set an example. So how can they understand?” Krishna then thought, “I’ll go and set an example and enable them to taste this *rasa*, this mellow. Only then will it be possible for them to understand. These conditioned souls are only eating stool, very abominable things. They don’t know about this transcendental mellow. Only if someone can make them taste it can they then understand.”

Krishna comes once in a *kalpa*, and Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu also comes once in a *kalpa*. Krishna was thinking, “Many many *yugas* have passed. For such a long time I have not given this *prema-bhakti*. So now I’ll go again and give this *prema-bhakti*. I myself will observe and practice this *prema* in my life and set an example for these conditioned souls of *Kali-yuga*. Otherwise it is not possible for them to understand.”

*śrī-kṛṣṇa caitanya gosāṇi vrajendra kumāra
rasa-maya-mūrti kṛṣṇa śākṣat śṛṅgāra*

Lord Krishna Chaitanya is Krishna, *vrajendra kumāra*, the embodiment of *rasa*. He is amorous love personified. [Cc. ādi 4.222]

Therefore, that *rasa-maya-mūrti*, embodiment of *rasa*, Vrajendra Kumar, Krishna, became Gaura-sundar, assuming the mood of the *gopīs*, because the *gopīs*, especially Radharani, are enjoying the fullest *rasa*. *ekali rādhikā āsvāde sakali* — “Only Radharani experiences these *rasas* fully. So I have to assume the mood of Radharani, appear myself, and distribute them.” In this way, Krishna became Gauranga Mahaprabhu and set a practical example of the confidential teachings in *Bhagavad-gītā*. ❧

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar, 31 March 1989.

IN WHATEVER BIRTH I TAKE ...

Pāṇḍava-gītā

Also known as the *Prapanna-gītā*, the *Pāṇḍava-gītā* is a collection of prayers to the Lord that have been voiced by various great personalities in the Purāṇic era. It is called *Pāṇḍava-gītā* because many of the prayers are offered by the five *pāṇḍavas* or their relatives. It is known as *Prapanna-gītā* due to the fact that the prayers express the mood of *pra-panna*, complete surrender at the feet of the Lord. The name of the devotee who collected these verses is not known, nor is there any known evidence of when it was compiled. Copies of this literature have been found amongst old Sanskrit manuscripts in libraries of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

nakula uvāca

*yadi gamana-madhasāt karma-pāśānubandhāt
yadi ca gati-vihīne jāyate pakṣi-kīṭe
kṛmī-śatam api gatvā tad gatābhyantarātmā
mama bhavatu hṛdisthā keśave bhaktir ekā*

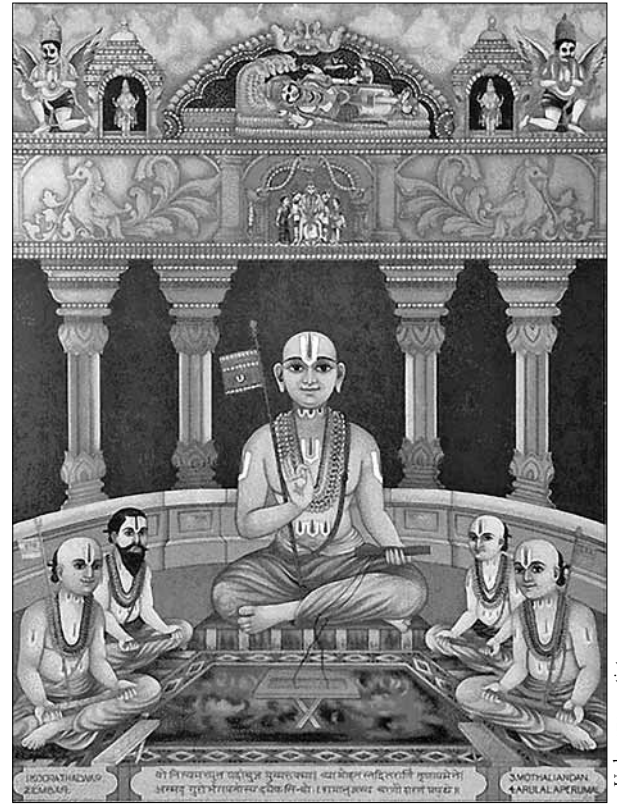
Nakula said: O Lord! Even if, tied by the ropes of karma, I take a lower birth as a bird or an insect, or even if I am born a hundred times as a worm, my constant prayer is that in all those births may unshakeable devotion to Lord Keshava manifest in my heart. (Text 8)

draupady uvāca

*kīṭeṣu vṛkṣeṣu sarīśrapeṣu
rakṣā-pīśācheṣu api yatra tatra
jātasya me bhavatu keśava te prasādāt
tvayy eva bhaktir acalā 'vyabhicāriṇī ca*

Draupadi said: “Whether I am born as an insect, a bird, or a beast, whether I take birth as a demon, a ghost, or a human, may I have unshakeable devotion to you and to you alone. (12) ❧

— Translated from the edition with Bengali translation by Sashibhushan Purakayastha. Published by Upendra Krishna Chakravarti. Kolkata. Sal 1319 (1910 AD).



Unknown artist

INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD-GITA

Sripada Ramanujacharya

By meditating on whose lotus feet I have been freed from infinite impurities and have attained the truth — to that Yamuna Acarya, I offer my obeisances.

Hariḥ om! The Lord of Lakshmi Devi is:

- free from all undesirability;
- the only object of auspiciousness;
- uniquely different from all varieties of things;
- the personification of inexhaustible knowledge and joy;
- an unlimited ocean of limitless groups of auspicious innate qualities, such as knowledge, power, opulence, strength, energy, effulgence, etc.;
- having an inconceivable, unchangeable divine form of his own choice that is eternally perfect and illuminated with infinite qualities such as divine aroma, beauty, tender youth, charm, etc.;
- decorated with numerously variegated and infinitely marvelous eternal divine ornaments befitting him;
- decorated with an infinite number of eternally marvelous and perfectly auspicious weapons suited to him;
- the dear object of affection of Lakshmi Devi, the goddess decorated with infinite auspicious qualities such as having an

excellent form manifest according to her own desire, with supreme majesty, unlimited opulence, like-minded mood, etc.;

- the one whose lotus feet are worshipped by his desire by devotees who are decorated with infinite qualities such as transcendental knowledge, opulence, activities, etc., and who are fully absorbed in the mood of servitude according to their respective eternal forms (*svarūpa*), positions (*sthiti*) and inclinations (*pravṛtti*);
- the one whose transcendental form and behavior are beyond the purview of the mind and speech;
- the one whose variegated and astonishing residential planets are equipped with infinite objects, places, etc., for enjoyment suited to him, and are infinitely delightful, opulent, and vast.
- the one whose eternal pastime is to create, maintain, and destroy variegated universes filled with various kinds of enjoyers and enjoyed objects.
- the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme *puruṣa* known as Narayan, and who is situated in his inconceivable form after creating everyone and everything in the universe — from Lord Brahma to inanimate objects;
- the one who, although inconceivable and unmanifest even in the meditation and worship performed by Lord Brahma, demigods and humans, gives up this inconceivable nature and repeatedly appears amongst the demigods and humans where he manifests a

suitable form for them, accepts worship from them, and awards them fruits of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. He does so out of his infinite mercy, goodness, love, and magnanimity.

This same Lord manifested a form visible to the mundane senses on the pretext of relieving the earth of unnecessary burden, while actually coming to provide shelter for souls like us. After that, he manifested sweet pastimes that captivated the eyes and minds of all kinds of living entities.

Thus, he delivered Putana, Sakatasura, the Yamala Arjuna trees, Arishtasura, Pralamba, Dhenukasura, Kaliya, Keshi, Kuvalayapida, Chanura, Mushtika, Toshala, Kamsa, etc. By spreading a philosophy and personal teachings full of unlimited mercy, benefit, and love, he satisfied the entire world. By exhibiting his transcendental beauty and divine qualities, he made Akrura, the garland weaver, and others, his topmost devotees. On the pretense of inciting Arjuna to fight the battle, he manifested his devotional service, which is the topmost goal of life and which is achieved in practice by following the knowledge and activities specified in the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

There (in Kurukshetra), before the war between the Kauravas and Pandavas began, the same Lord of all Lords in a human form, Sri Krishna — through his love for his surrendered devotee Arjuna and with the intention of delivering the entire world — made Arjuna the chariot-fighter and accepted for himself the role of driver for that chariot.

Even though knowing this exalted position of Arjuna, Dhritarashtra — the personality blind in all possible ways, desired the victory of his son Suyodhana (Duryodhana), and thus he asked Sanjay the following question (the first verse of the *Bhagavad-gītā*).

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 299

Śrī Kāmadā Ekādaśī

22 April 2013

Circulation 6,320

Highlights

- **PLEASE MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **DARSHAN OF SRI GURU**

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

- **VRINDAVAN SPRING**

By the vaiṣṇava poet Nripati Lakshmi Narayan

- **NAMA-TATVA — BURNING AWAY SINS**

From the Bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī of Sri Lakshmidhara

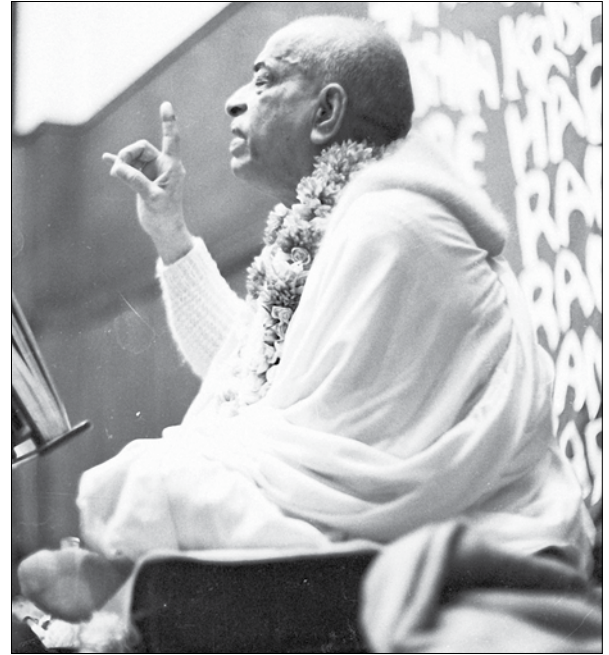


PLEASE MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS

***His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada***

Now you are placed in a responsible post, so I may request you to very carefully execute the regular program as you have learned it in Los Angeles. If the regulative principles are strictly followed there is no chance of *māyā*'s dangerous influence to come in and cause some havoc. *Māyā* is always peeping, ready to take advantage of our any lapse from the devotional standard, so everyone should be continuously engaged in chanting, studying, working or preaching. This full schedule will save you from engagement elsewhere. *Māyā* and Krishna are always side by side. Either one is serving Krishna or serving *māyā*. Please manage the affairs of your temple in close cooperation with your godbrothers, and Krishna will give you the good intelligence to progress nicely. (Letter to Rsabhadeva Das. 16 November 1970.)

Please do not neglect to engage yourself in the prescribed duties for maintaining your spiritual strength. Without keeping spiritual strength there is no question of any accomplishment like painting or anything else. So Krishna consciousness is first in all circumstances. Everything should be regulated in devotional service. Just like eating. Eating is necessary to remain fit, but too much eating means disease and too



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

little eating means starving. One must adjust things properly. That is the program of Krishna consciousness. (Letter to Jadurani Dasi. 16 November 1970.)

Simply by keeping a nicely regulated temple schedule with many integrated devotional activities, our preaching program is sure to be a success. Following the regulative principles strictly is our strength in spiritual life. If they are neglected then all our efforts simply become spoiled. So go on the

way you have described and Krishna will surely bless you. (Letter to Tulsi Das. 28 December 1970.)

Our standard of purity must be kept, otherwise there will be loss of spiritual strength and subsequent fall down. Every one of you should be thoroughly convinced of the power of the Hare Krishna mantra to protect you in all circumstances and chant accordingly at all times without offense. Then advancement will be swift and you will gradually come to see everything clearly so that you may act for the pleasure of the Lord without uncertainty. When one is spontaneously engaged in this way, always in the service of the Lord and anxious to avoid all mundane activities, he is actually experiencing the taste of bliss in Krishna consciousness. (Letter to Damodara Das. 10 January 1971.)

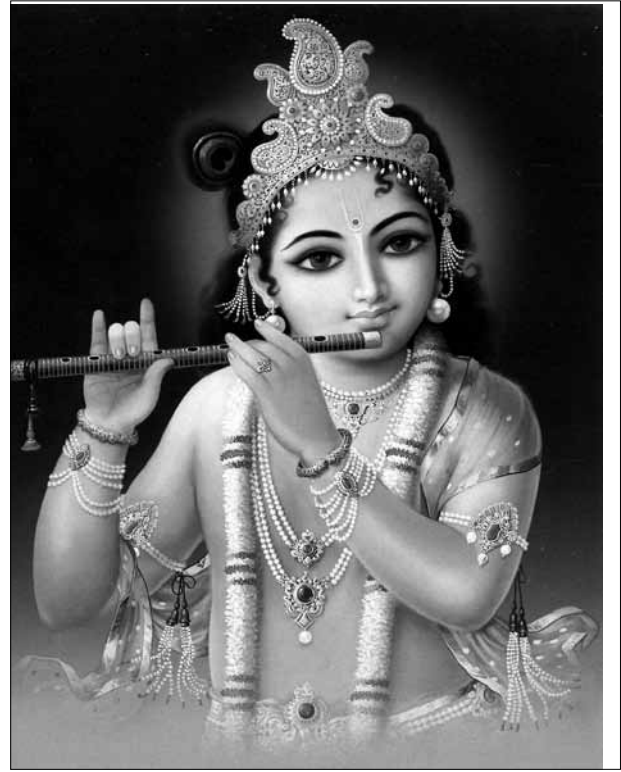
This routine work, such as chanting, speaking, rising early, cleaning, cooking and offering *prasādam*, *ārati*, reading books — these activities are the backbone of our society, and if we practice them nicely in a regulative manner then our whole program will be successful. If we become slack or neglect these things then everything else we may try will fail. So it is very important that you keep your standards very high in these activities. Then your preaching will be strong. (Letter to Patita Uddharana Das. 8 December 1971.)

Please continue these programs with added enthusiasm. They are very important. You should be very careful to follow all of the principles very rigidly. You must rise early (before 4:00 AM) attend the *mangala-ārati*, attend the classes, chant at least sixteen good rounds daily, and observe the four basic principles. These things you must do without fail. Otherwise there is no question of spiritual life. (Letter to Caranaravinda Das. 2 April 1975.) ❀

DARSHAN OF SRI GURU

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

There are two stages: *anartha-yukta-avasthā* and *anartha-mukta-avasthā* — covered by *anarthas* and free from *anarthas*. In the stage where one is completely covered by *anarthas*, how can one see guru? Although one may externally see guru, one cannot see the real *svarūpa* of guru. For one who is free from *anarthas*, his *guru-darśana*, his seeing, is different. It is not the same.



One who is covered by *anarthas* will see guru as *bhogyavastu*. “Oh! *Gurudeva* will give me all sorts of enjoyment. If I take shelter of guru I will get so much enjoyment.” That is *bhogyadarśana*. Most of us see in that way. “*Gurudeva* will give me nice *prasāda*, nice place to stay, nice vehicles, everything nice. Yes, very good.”

“*Gurudeva*, I would like to marry a very beautiful girl.”

Then *gurudeva* says, “Yes, marry a very beautiful girl.” That stage is *bhogyadarśana*. But for one who is *anartha-mukta-avasthā*, on the stage of being free from *anarthas*, his *guru darśana* is *sevyadarśana*, he sees that guru is to be served.

“I will give *gurudeva* all sorts of pleasure through my service. I will never expect anything for my own pleasure.” That is *sevyadarśana*. One should understand this *guru-tatva* perfectly well, and only one who does so can say, “Unless I take shelter of such a guru I cannot become free from all delusions, material fears and lamentations.”

aśoka-abhaya, amṛta-ādhāra
tomāra caraṇa-dvaya
tāhāte ekhona, viśrāma labhiyā
chārinu bhavera bhaya

(*Śaraṇāgati, ātma-nivedana* 8, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur)



Unknown artist

Spring in Vrindavan

Who can show you the lotus feet of Krishna? Who can lead you to the lotus feet of Krishna? Who can give you the clue how to see or approach the lotus feet of Krishna? That is guru, a *premī-guru*, *premī-bhakta*, a dear devotee who has established a loving relationship with Krishna. He is day and night, twenty-four hours, engaged in the loving service of Krishna. Only such a guru who has bound up Krishna in his heart with the rope of love can lead you to the lotus feet of Krishna, because he is a very dear and intimate associate of Krishna. Such a personality is a *rādhā-prīya-sakhī*, a very dear girl companion of Srimati Radharani.

If one can develop simplicity in one's heart, take shelter at the lotus feet of guru, and serve him without duplicity, then one will get the mercy of that guru. Then one will find a place at the lotus feet of Krishna. Otherwise one cannot. Therefore, serve *guru-pāda-padma* without duplicity, *niṣkapaṭa-sevā*, with your heart and soul, and then you will get the mercy of the guru, as a result of which he will take you to the lotus feet of Krishna. ❧

— From *Bhakti Naipunya*, chapter 2. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar. 1994.

VRINDAVAN SPRING

By the vaiṣṇava poet Nripati Lakshmi Narayan

In this composition, the poet glorifies the spring season of Vrindavan.

*vasanta-kāle vāsantī phūle
vaise madhukara tāya
rasa vithāri virikha pari
pikavara kuhu gāya*

During spring, the bumblebee sits on the *vāsantī* flower. The cuckoo, being the foremost amongst birds, expands *rasa* by singing a sweet “*kuhu*”.

*baraja nārī vihare hari
vimala yamunā tīre
bārīja pānti vikaca ati
pavana bahe dhīre*

The ladies of Vrindavan glance at Lord Hari by the banks of the spotless Yamuna. Heavily blossomed hosts of lotus flowers [decorate the river] as the breezes blow mildly.

*vinoda cūḍā bakula beḍā
varihā śobhe bhāla
vadana śaśi āloka rāśi
vipina kare āla*

Lord Hari's head is decorated with a beautiful ornament of *bakula* flowers and his forehead is decorated with peacock feathers. His moonlike face, the sum and substance of all beautiful objects, illuminates the entire forest.

*bara yoṣite vīṇāra gīte
bolaye madhura tāna
ballava pāṣe ballavī bhāṣe
vāṁṣite milāo gāna*

The principal *gopīs* play the *vīṇā* while singing in melodious voices. The *ballavī* (Srimati Radharani) sits next to the *ballava* (Krishna), talks sweetly to him, and supplements the flute with her delightful songs.

*vadana vidhu vacana madhu
śunite juḍāo kāna
lachimi bhaṇe ei śubha dine
vilase gopī kāna*

His face — beautiful as the moon! His words — sweet like honey! By listening to them, one's ears attain perfection. Lakshmi Narayan says, "On this auspicious day, the *gopīs* and Kanu (Krishna) enjoy sweet pastimes." ❀

— Translated from *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, fourth edition, April 2010. Compiled and edited by Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay. Published by Shishu Sahitya Sansad Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata.

श्री कृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु NAMA TATVA — BURNING AWAY SINS

**From Bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī
of Sri Lakshmidhara**

*ajñānād atha vā jñānād
uttamaśloka nāma yat
saṅkīrtitaṁ aghaṁ puṁsāṁ
dahaty edho yathā 'nalaḥ*

Done with or without knowledge, the congregational chanting of the holy names of Lord Uttamashloka burns away one's sins just as fire burns away its fuel.

*yathā 'gadaṁ vīryatamam
upayuktaṁ yadṛcchayā
ajānato 'py ātma guṇān
kuryān mantrō 'py udāhṛtaḥ*

Just like a powerful and effective medicine independently shows its desired result even without the knowledge of the recipient, so does the chanting of the mantra [of the Lord's names].

*harir harati pāpāni
duṣṭa cittair api smṛtaḥ
anicchāyāpi saṁspr̥ṣṭo
dahaty eva hi pāvakaḥ*

Lord Hari snatches away the sins of even a rogue [who chants his name], just as fire burns a person who unwillingly touches it.

*vartamānaṁ ca yat pāpam
yad bhūtaṁ yad bhaviṣyati
tat sarvaṁ nirdahaty āśu
govindānala kīrtanam*

Whatever sins exist [in one] in the present, past or the future are immediately burnt in the fire of Lord Govinda's *kīrtana*. ❀

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from *Śrī Lakṣmīdhara Viracitā Śrī Bhagavan Nāma Kaumudī* with the *prakāśa* commentary. Achyut Grantha Mala Karyalaya, Kashi. Vikram Samvat 1984 (Corresponding to 1927 A.D.)



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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 300

Śrī Varūthini Ekādaśī

05 May 2013

Circulation 6,340

Highlights

- **MAINTAINING CLEANLINESS**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **THE GREAT TREE NAMED SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM**

Srila Sridhar Swami

- **SRI BHAGAVATASHTAKAM**

Srila Rasikananda Prabhu



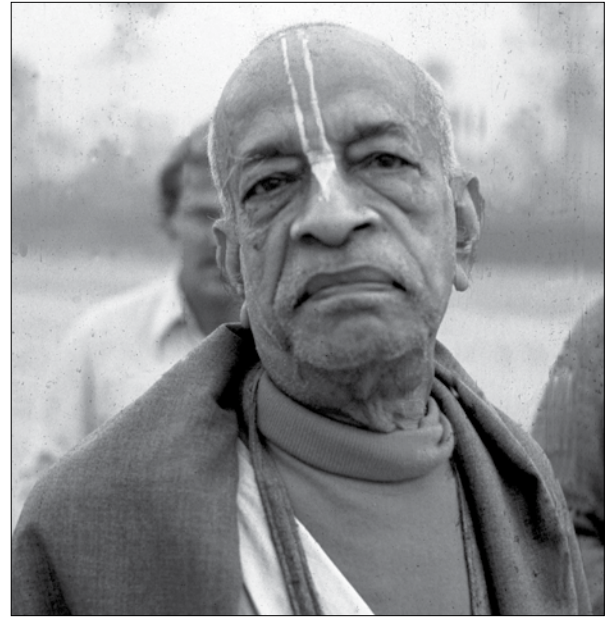
MAINTAINING CLEANLINESS

***His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada***

Everything in the temple should be kept nice and clean. Everyone should wash their hands before touching anything of Krishna's. We should always remember that Krishna is the purest, and similarly only the pure can associate with him. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. (Letter to Nandarani, Krsna Devi, Subala, and Uddhava. 3 October 1967.)

You must live up to the rules and regulations of *brahminical* life. First and foremost is cleanliness. In your country they have so many filthy habits. For example, they don't wash after eating. A brahmin does not do like that. If he did so in India, he would be highly criticized. So even if you eat a little, still you must wash immediately. And the place that you eat at must be washed off immediately too.

A brahmin's name is *śuci*, or one who is clean. In the toilet room wash with water and wash your hands with soap. Then wash feet, face and mouth. Your cloth must be washed daily, especially any cloth used to sleep in. In the kitchen also, things should be kept spotless and cooking should only be done by brahmins; others may assist. That is the same procedure followed with deity worship. So these are some of the points to note in *brahminical* life. Keep yourself clean outside by bathing, etc., and clean inside by chanting Hare Krishna mantra. Go on in this way and your rapid



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

advancement in Krishna Consciousness will be certain. (Letter to Laksmi Narayana. 8 July 1971.) ❧

THE GREAT TREE NAMED SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Srila Sridhar Swami

*śrīmad-bhāgavatābhidhaḥ sura-tarus
tārāṅkurah sajjaniḥ
skandhair dvādaśabhis tataḥ pravilasat
bhaktyālavālodayaḥ
dvātriṁśat tri-śataṁ ca yasya vilasac
chākhāḥ sahasrāṇy alam*

*parṇāny aṣṭa-daśeṣṭado 'tisulabho
varvarti sarvopari*

This literature named Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is a desire tree. Its liberating seed is rooted in the spiritual world. It has twelve main roots [twelve cantos] forming its trunk that have arisen from the soil of *bhakti*. It has a total of three hundred and thirty five stems [335 chapters in all the cantos], upon which are eminently situated eighteen thousand leaves [verses], which are capable of bestowing the reader's desired object.

Translator's Note: *dvā triṁśat tri-śataṁ ca* should ordinarily have been interpreted as 332, but here it has been interpreted as 335. The total number of chapters in the Śrīmad-bhāgavatam are 335. *dvā triṁśat tri-śataṁ ca* has thus been interpreted as a *samāhāra dvandva samāsa*: 'dvātriṁśat ca trayas ca [tri] śatāni ca', which means 32 + 3 + 300 = 335.

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from Srila Sridhar Swami's commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.1.1. Sanskrit transcribed from *aneka vyākhyā samalanakṛtāṁ* Śrīmad-bhāgavatam. Edited and compiled by Shri Krishna Shankar Shastri. Ahmedabad. 1965.

SRI BHAGAVATASHTAKAM

Srila Rasikananda Prabhu

*śrī-govinda-padāravinda-madhupān
anyābhilāṣojjitān
pūrṇa-prema-rasotsavojjvala-mano-
vṛtti-prasannānanān
śāśvat-kṛṣṇa-kathā-mahāmṛta-payo
rāśau mudā khelato
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nīpatya kṣitau*

To those who are like bumblebees residing at the lotus feet of Sri Govinda; to those who have completely given up all material desires [including the desire for liberation]; to those whose consciousness is enlightened and faces are effulgent due to a complete festival of *prema-rasa*; to those who eternally sport joyously in the vast nectarean milk ocean of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*pādābje kṛta-sat-kṛtāv api catur-
varge gṛhṇāṁ kurvato
dr̥k-pāte 'pi gata-vyathān vraja-pati-
premāmṛta-svādakān
mannānān atidustarāṁ bhava-mahā-
pāthonidhiṁ goṣpadāṁ*

*vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nīpatya kṣitau*

To those who exhibit hatred towards the four aims of life [*dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*], even though those four goals offer obeisances at their feet; to those who by their very sight relieve one of all miseries; to those who consider the insurmountable ocean of material existence as water in a calf's hoofprint; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*mṛgyaṁ brahma-bhavādibhir vraja-vadhū
nāthāṅghri-kañja-dvayīm
svātantryāt praṇayoru-rajjubhir aho
baddhā balān nirbharam
svacchandaṁ pibatas tad-āsava-rasaṁ
prasyandamānaṁ mudā
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nīpatya kṣitau*

To those who have independently and completely bound up with the rope of love the two lotus feet of the Lord of the *gopīs*, which are sought



Srila Rasikananda Prabhu

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after by Brahma, Shiva, etc.; to those who freely delight in drinking the intoxicating nectar emanating from those lotus feet; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*viśveṣāṁ hṛdayotsavān sva-sukhadān
māyā-manuṣyākṛtīn
kṛṣṇenādhyavatāritān jana-samud-
dhārāya pṛthvī-tale
saṁsārābdhi-vahitra-pāda-kamalāṁs
trailokyā-bhāgyodayān
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nipatya kṣitau*

To those who experience a delightful festival within their hearts and who cause a delightful festival in the hearts of the residents of this world; to those who, after the disappearance of Lord Krishna, have accepted a material human body for the complete deliverance of the general population on earth; to those whose lotus feet are a suitable boat to cross the ocean of material existence; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*ālokāmṛta-dānato bhava-mahā-
bandhaṁ nṛṇāṁ chindataḥ
sparśāt pāda-saroja-śauca-payasāṁ
tāpa-trayaṁ bhindataḥ*

*ālāpād vraja-nāgarasya padayoḥ
premānam ātanvato
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nipatya kṣitau*

To those whose mere sight bestows transcendental nectar and thus shatters the chains that trap souls in material existence; to those who by the touch of the waters that have bathed their lotus feet the three types of miseries are destroyed; to those whose speech bestows love for the two lotus feet of Lord Krishna, the *nāgara*, romantic hero, of Vraja; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*bhāvāveśa-samujjvalān pulakino
harṣāśru-dhārāvalī-
nirdhautānana-paṅkajān nava-navā-
nandād bhṛṣaṇī nṛtyataḥ
premoccaiś cayitaṁ sa-gadgada-padaṁ
gopī-pater gāyato
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṁ
mūrdhnā nipatya kṣitau*

To those who are seen to radiate effulgence as they display ecstatic symptoms of *bhāva*; to those whose bodies display goose bumps and whose



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lotus faces are drenched with streams of flowing tears of ecstasy; to those who in fits of newer and newer ecstasies dance profusely in various ways; to those who in a loud voice sing the choicest verses glorifying the Lord of the *gopīs* in a choked voice; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*premāsvāda-parāyaṇān hari-pada-
sphūrti-sphuran-mānasān
ānandaika-payonidhīn rasa-samul-
lāsi-smīta-śrī-mukhān
dhanyān sac-caritaugha-nandita-janān
kāruṇya-pūrāśrayān
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṇ
mūrdhnā nīpatya kṣitau*

To those who are fully dedicated to tasting love of God; to those whose minds always find inspiration in the lotus feet of Lord Hari; to those unique oceans of bliss; to those whose faces exhibit a smile resulting from the bliss of *bhakti-rasa*; to those most fortunate souls who by their excessive good qualities please everyone; to those overflowing reservoirs of mercy; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*kṛṣṇād anyam ajānataḥ kṣaṇam api
svapne 'pi viśveśvare
tasmin bhaktim ahaitukīm vidadhato
hṛt-kāya-vāgbhiḥ sadā*



SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

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Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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*śrīlān sad-guṇa-puñja-keli-nīlayān
premāvatārān ahaṇ
vande bhāgavatān imān anulavaṇ
mūrdhnā nīpatya kṣitau*

To those who even in their dreams for a moment do not know of any master besides Krishna; to those who exhibit causeless devotion to the Lord of the universe through their hearts, bodies and speech; to those bearers of good fortune; to those who are shelters of innumerable good qualities; to those incarnations of *prema*; to those devotees of the Lord (*bhāgavatas*) I offer prostrated obeisances with my head on the ground.

*etad bhāgavatāṣṭakam paṭhati yaḥ
śraddhānvitaḥ kṣemadam
bhakty-udreka-vivardhanam pratipadam
prema-pramoda-pradam
premāṇam paramam dhruvam sa labhate
vṛndāvaneśātmasu
kṣipram bhāgavateṣu yena vaśago
gopāṅganā-vallabhah*

Those who faithfully read this *bhāgavatāṣṭakam*— which provides all protection, creates an abundance of *bhakti* at each step, and bestows the great joy of *prema*— shall quickly attain the ultimate stage of love of the *bhāgavata* devotees, the near and dear ones of the Lord of Vrindavan. Indeed, those *bhāgavatas* are the ones who control the Lord of the *gopīs*. ❀

— Translated from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)





तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 301

Śrī Mohinī Ekādaśī

21 May 2013

Circulation 6,360

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PRAYING TO LORD NRSIMHADEVA

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

When Prahlad Maharaja saw Lord Nrsimhadeva he was not at all afraid of the fierce features of the Lord. The big jaws and nails of Lord Nrsimhadeva, the fiery tongue of the Lord, and the gigantic lion's head did not create any fear for Prahlad Maharaja. He said, "My dear Lord! I am not afraid of your fierce features, but I am afraid of the repeated cycle of birth and death in material existence." That instruction is very valuable. In our material existence we are always in a dangerous and fearful condition, but by the spell of *māyā* we do not take it very seriously. (Letter to Jadurani. 13 January 1968.)

After killing the demon Hiranyakashipu, Lord Nrsimhadeva was pacified by Prahlad Maharaja, who offered prayers in hymns that are very instructive. I shall be preparing these for you in my *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. I will simply cite one nice verse: "Oh benevolent Lord! Friend of the fallen! Oh tender-hearted one! Bound by my own karma, I have been thrown into the midst of these demons who are destroying everything of your devotees! I am therefore extremely averse to the unbearable and terrible miseries of this cycle of birth and death in this world devoid of service and devotion to you. Oh Lord! When will you be pleased with me and call me to the shelter of your lotus feet, which are soothing like the cooling beams of ten million autumnal moons?" (Letter to Uddhava. 16 February 1968.)



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

UNFIT FOR HEARING BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

Various Commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā 18.67

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati*

This confidential knowledge may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of me.

Srila Sridhar Swami:

*evaṁ gītārtha-tattvam upadiśya tat-sampradāya-pravartane
niyamam āha idaṁ iti. idaṁ gītārtha-tattvam te tvayā atapaskāya
dharmānuṣṭhāna-hīnāya na vācyam. na ca abhaktāya gurāv*



Lord Nrsimhadev

īṣvare ca bhakti-sūnyāya kadācid api na vācyaṁ na cāśuśrūṣave paricaryāṁ akurvate vācyaṁ. māṁ parameśvaraṁ yo 'bhyasūyati manuṣya-dṛṣṭyā doṣāropeṇa nindati tasmai na ca vācyaṁ.

Translation: Thus having spoken the absolute truth named *Bhagavad-gītā*, in this verse the Lord now speaks of the rule regarding its propagation in the various *sampradāyas*. The Lord says, “This confidential truth about *Bhagavad-gītā* should not be spoken by you to a person who is devoid of religiosity and scriptural rites (*atapaska*). Nor should it ever be spoken to a person who is devoid of devotion to guru or the Lord (*abhakta*). Nor to a person who does not worship me (*āśuśrūṣava*); and neither to those who envy me (*abhyasūya*), the Supreme Lord, for they see me as an ordinary human and criticize me.”

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur:

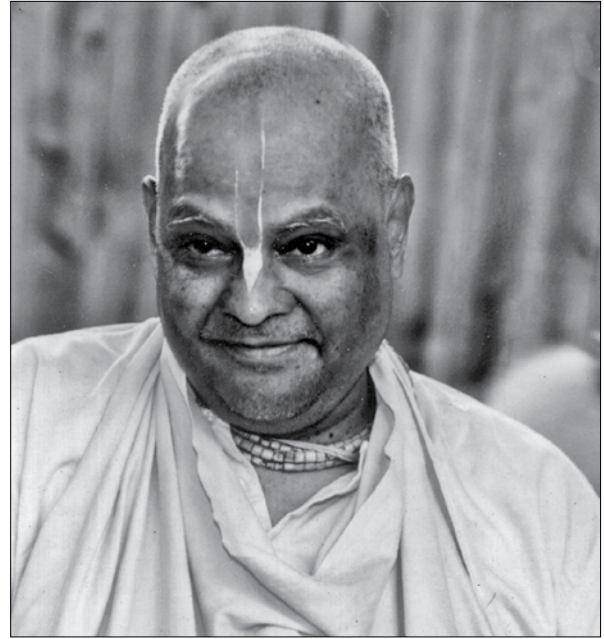
evaṁ gītā-śāstram upadiśya sampradāya-pravartane niyamam āha idam iti. atapaskāya asaṁyatendriyāya manaś cendriyāṇāṁ ca aikāgryaṁ paramaṁ tapaḥ iti smrteḥ. saṁyatendriye saty api abhaktāya na vācyaṁ. saṁyatendriyatvādi-dharma-traya-vattve 'pi yo mām abhyasūyati mayi nirupādhi-pūrṇa-brahmaṇi māyā-sāvarnya-doṣam āropayati tasmai sarvathaiva na vācyaṁ.

Translation: Thus having spoken the literature named *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord now speaks of the rule regarding its propagation in the various *sampradāyas* in this verse. The word *atapaskāya* refers to a person

who has not controlled his senses. The *śruti* says, “The concentration of mind and senses is the ultimate austerity (*tapa*)”. Furthermore, even if someone has controlled his senses, still this knowledge should not be spoken to him if he is a non-devotee (*abhakta*). And even if someone has attained the three qualities of sense control, devotion, and following scriptural regulations, this literature should never be spoken to him if he is envious (*abhyasūya*) of me by imposing my qualities on the attributeless brahman.

Translator's Note: Srila Baladeva Vidyabhushan repeats almost the same points, except that he interprets the word *āśuśrūṣave* to mean – “One devoid of the desire to listen.” He also quotes a reference from the *Vedānta-sūtra* (4.50) which says — *anaviṣkurvaṇv anvaṣyāt* — “True knowledge is not attained by those not in the disciplic succession.”

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit text available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)



PLEASE HELP ME

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

For these last two days you have arranged this *guru-pūjā* and spent much valuable time. As a friend I must tell you that I have many frailties, weaknesses, and disqualifications in me. I am telling you the truth. We have all come here being attracted to the lotus feet of *guru-pāda-padma*, our revered spiritual master Sri Srimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the previous *ācāryas*. Those gurus are very rich people. They are not materially rich, but their wealth

is *prema-dhana*, love of God. We have come here with the greed how to get that wealth, that *prema-dhana*. That is our purpose in coming here.

For the last two days you have all offered *śraddhāñjali*, homages, unto me. Although I am a most fallen and wretched worm in stool, you have glorified me. Indirectly, by your glorification, you have given me a hint of how I can possess all those good qualities. Therefore, bowing my head with folded hands, I offer prayers to you one and all. Today we have gotten an opportunity to make our offerings from the core of our hearts to the lotus feet of such *ācārya-guru-vargas*. But how can I offer such *pūjā*? I am not guru, I am *aguru*, *laghu*. In Sanskrit, *laghu*, light, is the opposite of *guru*, heavy. For one who is *laghu*, how will he be able to see guru? By some of the very small and insignificant portion of mercy that I have gotten from my *guru mahārāja*, I am trying my best to render service to his lotus feet. On this day I request you, one and all, please help me in this effort. I request your heartfelt love, help, and cooperation. I consider this my asset. Otherwise I cannot render such service.

Many people have doubt in *guru-pāda-padma*. If you have doubts then you cannot make advancement. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna says *saṁśayātmā vinaśyati* [Bg 4.40] — “A doubtful person perishes.” Criticism and doubt are not *bhakti*. In *bhakti* there is only *seva* and *sevaka* — the relationship of servant and master. One who is real guru never says, “I am guru.” He sees everyone according to *jīvera* ‘*svarūpa*’ haya *kṛṣṇera* ‘*nitya-dāsa*’ — he sees their *svarūpa*, he sees that all are servants of Krishna. The guru has such a vision. His vision is not material vision, therefore he is guru. Through him we get *bhagavān*, Krishna. Guru says, *ṭṭṇād api sunicena* — “I am lower than the straw in the street.” He is so humble. He has no pride in being a guru. But if someone says, “Don’t you know who I am? I am a great guru! Great *ācārya*!” This is *dambha*, pride. It is a demoniac characteristic, not a divine characteristic. It is not a characteristic of a *vaiṣṇava-sādhū-guru*. A real guru has humility. If one thinks, “I am guru.” Then he is not guru. He is *goru*, a quadruped, a cow or a bull.

I have no qualification to become guru. I have no desire to become guru. That was not the purpose for which I left my home. My guru said, “Accept disciples. Give them training. Otherwise how can you do this project? You should have your own men, otherwise how can you manage it?” He told me again and again.

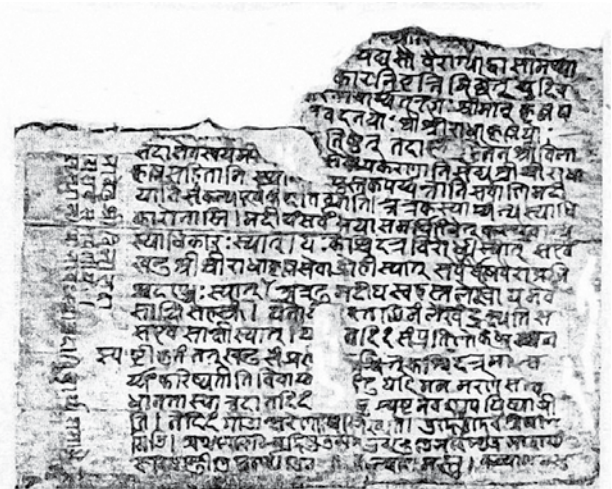
He also wrote me a letter, “Under your leadership this project will be done.” At that time, I said, “My dear Srila Prabhupada, I don’t want to be the head. I want to be the tail.” But he said, “I want!” That means that my *gurudeva* wants that I become guru and accept disciples. To accept disciples means to welcome a great danger. You should understand that I’m in a very, very dangerous situation. I cannot eat. I cannot sleep at night. You will never find a more distressed person than me; you won’t find a person who is in a more dangerous situation than I am. So with folded hands I request you, please protect me. This is my request at your feet today. This is the desire of my guru that I remain in such a dangerous situation. By this he will be happy and pleased. Therefore for his pleasure I have accepted this dangerous situation to become guru and accept disciples. I think my guru has sent all of you to me just to give me protection, not to put me in a more dangerous situation. Therefore my request to you is to please protect me. To accept disciples means to keep up the missionary activities that guru has started. We are *goṣṭhy-ānandis*, preachers. So we have to keep up the missionary activities that our guru has started. Not that we just occupy the *āsana*, seat, of guru. ॐ

— Chapter 6. *Śrī-Guru-vandanā* — The Worship of Sri Guru. Gopal Jiu Publications. 2010.

MY FINAL WILL

Srila Jiva Goswami

saṁvat 1663 varṣe mārgaśirṣa-māsī kṛṣṇa-dvitiyāyām suṅghita-nāma-dheya-śrī-śrī-rūpa-sanātanākhyā-mahā-mahima-caraṇa-kamalānucarasya śrī-śrī-vṛndāvana-sthasya jīva-nāmnaḥ saṅkalpa-patṛīyam.



Srila Jiva Goswami's Original Handwritten Last Will

mayā yaḥ kaścīd vyāpāraḥ kṛto 'yam asti, sa sarvo 'pi mayārādhyamānayoḥ śrīmat-pratimā-rūpeṇāvīrbhāvitayor anayoḥ śrī-śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇayoḥ sevā-saukāryārtham eva. sā ca sevā prathamata eva sādhu-caritāya paramārtha-mātra-parāyaṇāya śrī-vilāsa-dāsāya samarpitāsti. tasmād akhilāni tadīya-sevaupayikatayā saṅgrhitāni. mad-anantaram śrī-vilāsa-dāsasyaiva jñeyāni.

16 November 1606: The following is the final will of the Vrindavan resident by the name of Jiva — the constant follower of the lotus feet of the greatly renowned Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan, whose names are worthy of being chanted:

Whatever activities have been performed by me have all been performed for the facilitation of the service of my worshipable Lordships Sri Sri Radha Krishna, who are present in their deity forms. Firstly, I give this service to the saintly-natured soul exclusively dedicated to the service of the absolute — Sri Vilas Das. Whatever paraphernalia has been collected for Sri Sri Radha Krishna's worship should be known as belonging to Sri Vilas Das after my departure.

kintu madīya-deha-nāśe yady asau vairāgyād vā sāmārthyābhāvād vā svādhikāra-nivṛttim icchet, yadi ca parama-sac-caritraḥ śrī-bhāratācārya-tanūjaḥ śrīmān kṛṣṇa-dāsa-nāmā brāhmaṇaḥ sāmpratavad anayoḥ śrī-śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇayoḥ sevāyām api tadānīm api tiṣṭhet, tadā tena śrī-vilāsa-dāseṇa svayam asmai sevā-sevopakaraṇāni sevya-śrī-śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sahitāni sthānāni pustaka-paryantāni sarvaṇi madīyāni saṅkalpa-pūrvakaṁ dātavyāni. atra kasyāpy

anyasyādhikāro nāsti. madīyaṁ sarvaṁ mayā samarpitaṁ cet kasya vānyasyādhikāraḥ syāt? yaḥ kaścīd atra virodhī syāt, sa eva khalu śrī-śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā-drohi syāt, sarvair vaiṣṇavai rājabhiś ca daṇḍyaḥ syāt.

However, if on the destruction of my body he [Sri Vilas Das] due to renunciation or incapability, wishes to be relieved of this service, and if the supremely saintly son of Sri Bharatacharya, the brahmin named Sriman Krishna Das, desires to be situated in the service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna at that time, then Sri Vilas Das should himself hand over all my paraphernalia of worship along with the worshipable deities and everything else including books through another will. In this there is no other person who can claim any rights. Everything that belongs to me is being offered by me so how can anyone else have a say in this matter? If anyone opposes this then certainly he is a heretic and punishable by all the vaiṣṇava kings.

śrīmatāḥ kṛṣṇadāsa-viprasyaṇyathā-bhāve tu śrī-vilāsa-dāseṇa sveccayā kasmaicid anyasmai yogyāya sarvaṁ samarpaṇīyam. yadi ca mayi jīvaty eva śrī-vilāsa-dāsasyānyathā-bhāvaḥ syāt, tadā vicārya samādheyaṁ mayaiva sarvaṁ.

atra tu madīya-sva-hasta-lekho 'yam eva sāksi-sahasram. yato yo jas tam imāṁ lekhaṁ draṅsyati, sa sa eva sāksi syāt. yadi tad idaṁ samprati lokaṣu na spaṣṭikṛtaṁ tat khalu sampraṇetā kaścit kaścīd atra mātṣaryāṁ kariṣyatīti vicāryam, kintu yadi mama maraṇe sāvadhānatā syāt, tadā tad idaṁ lokaṣu spaṣṭam eva jñāpayiṣyāmīti. tad idaṁ gauḍākṣareṇāpi likhyate. tad etad eva pramāṇam iti. atha ye kecin mad-iṣṭatamā bhavanti, te sarve 'py atra sāhāyāṁ kariṣyantīti prārthyate ca. kalyāṇam astu kalyāṇam astu.

If the brahmin Sri Krishna Das also is incapable of performing this service, then Sri Vilas Das should willingly surrender everything to another fully eligible person. If Sri Vilas Das wishes to retire from this service in my mortal presence, then all decisions will rest on me solely.

That this is my handwriting is a fact that can be testified by thousands. Moreover, those who saw me writing this will are also witnesses to the same. If it is not clear that certain handwriting is mine, then it should be considered if someone has enviously written something fake. However, if caution is exercised after my death, then this letter will be clear enough to convey my will. I am also writing the same in Bengali alphabet. That too should be considered as evidence. And I pray to all those who are my well-wishers that they may kindly help me in this matter. Auspiciousness to everyone! Auspiciousness to everyone! ॐ

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from the Sanskrit text available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 302

Śrī Aparā Ekādaśī

4 June 2013

Circulation 6,390

Highlights

• IMPETUS FOR PROGRESS

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• THE CAT BABA AND THE BLIND VULTURE

Adopted from the Hitopadeśa of Sri Vishnu Sharma



IMPETUS FOR PROGRESS

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Each one of us should be ideal to the other so that everyone can get impetus to make progress more and more. ☞

— Letter to Satsvarupa. 9 April 1968.

THE CAT BABA AND THE BLIND VULTURE

*Adapted from the Hitopadeśa
Of Sri Vishnu Sharma*

On the side of the banks of the river Ganga was a cliff on which grew a great fig tree. In the hollow of that tree lived a vulture named Jaradgava, who due to misfortune had no eyes and no claws. Out of pity, the birds residing on that tree used to take out a little portion of their own food and give it to the vulture to keep him alive. Jaradgava lived on that tree and protected the young fledgling birds there. Once a male cat called Dirghakarna came there to eat the baby birds. Seeing him approaching, the fledglings began crying out of fear. Hearing their cries, Jaradgava asked, “Who is coming?”

Seeing the vulture, Dirghakarna became fearful, and thought, “Oh, I am dead. Now he is going to tear me to pieces.” Then he thought, “I am too close to him, I cannot run away. Let whatever has to happen, happen. I will try to gain his faith and go near him. Thinking like this, he approached the vulture and said, “Respected sir, I salute you.”



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The vulture said, “Who are you?”

Dirghakarna said, “I am a cat.”

“A cat? Go away or you will be dead.”

Dirghakarna said, “Please first listen my words, and then if I should be killed, kill me.

*jātimātreṇa kim kaścid vadhyate pūjyate kvacit
vyavahāraṁ parijñāya vadhyaḥ pūjyo 'thavā bhavet*

Why should one be killed or worshiped simply based on caste or birth? First examine the behavior, and then decide whether to kill or worship. (Text 58)

The vulture said, “Why have you come here?”

The cat said, “I stay on the bank of the Ganga, where I take bath every day. I am vegetarian, observe celibacy, and I follow the *candrāyaṇa-vrata* [a difficult fast in which one's intake of food is diminished by one

mouthful each day as the moon wanes and increased in the same way as the moon waxes]. The birds constantly praise your honor as one wholly given to the study of morality. They have said that you are very religious, knowledgeable, and a very loving and trustworthy person. Therefore I have come to hear of religious principles from you who are advanced in both knowledge and age. You being such a knower of religion, still you are ready to kill me, your guest?"

The cat then began quoting more verses from *śāstra*:

*arāv apy ucitaṁ kāryam ātithyaṁ gr̥ham āgate
chettum apy āgate chhāyāṁ nopasaṁharate drumah*

Even if an enemy comes to one's home, he should be treated like a guest, just like a tree does not refuse its shade to a person who goes to cut it. (59)

"Moreover," Dirghakarna continued, "even if a guest is a young child, an old man, or a youthful person, he should be given all respect because a guest is worshipable like a guru for everyone. Sainly persons give their mercy even to those who have no good qualities, just as the moon does not refuse to give its moonlight over the house of a *caṇḍāla*. If a guest leaves someone's home dissatisfied then he takes away all the piety of the householder and, in return, the householder takes all the sins of the guest. Even if a man of a lower caste visits the house of a higher caste person, he should be well received because a guest is the embodiment of all the demigods.

Jaradgava said, "A cat likes to eat flesh. There are many infant birds living here. Therefore I spoke in that manner."

Hearing this, the cat said, "Sir," and as he spoke he first solemnly touched the ground as his first witness, then his two ears, and then, calling on Krishna as a second witness to his words, he said, "I am completely renounced. I have overcome lust and I observe the most difficult *candrāyana-vrata*. I am a knower of *śāstra*. Although various scriptures have different opinions on various topics, they all unanimously accept the principle that non-violence is the supreme religion."

Dirghakarna then began quoting further statements from *śāstra*:

*sarva-himsā-nivṛttā ye narāḥ sarva-sahāś ca ye
sarvasyāśraya-bhūtāś ca te narāḥ svarga-gāmināḥ*

Those persons who are free from all violence, who tolerate everything, and who give shelter to all, are definitely candidates for attaining heaven. (66)

*martavyam iti yad duḥkhaṁ puruṣasyopajāyate
śakyas tenānumānena paro 'pi parirakṣitum*

The distress one feels when one's life is in danger should be used to understand the unhappiness of others in similar circumstances. Thus one should abstain from killing others. (69)

*svacchanda vana-jātena śākenāpi prapūryate
asya dagdhodarasyārthe kaḥ kuryāt pātakaṁ mahat*

One can fill his belly from the grass and leaves naturally found in the forest. What need is there to commit sins just to stuff the stomach? (70)

In this way, the cat gained Jaradgava's confidence. The vulture came to think that Dirghakarna was a great saint, and he allowed the cat to live in the hollow of the tree. Dirghakarna would daily, very quietly, catch a few baby birds, bring them to his place, and eat them. The birds whose babies were eaten began lamenting, and they started searching for their young. Knowing that the birds were searching for him, the cat came out from the hollow of the tree and ran away. Shortly after that the birds found bones spread around here and there in the hollow of the tree, and thinking that the vulture had eaten their babies, they killed him.

Just as the cat moved into the shelter of the tree and took advantage of the situation, there are many false pretenders who want to join religious movements, which they see as an easy way to maintain themselves. This goes on everywhere in the world. If the managers of the ashrams, temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues are materialistic persons, spiritually blind and powerless like the blind and clawless old vulture, they will easily be impressed by cat-like pseudo-spiritualists who want to join their ranks. Quoting some verses from scripture and acting like saintly persons, such cat *bābās* convince gullible leaders to give them access to the neophyte followers in their congregations. The innocent babies of spiritual movements are thus destroyed, and the movements are compromised.

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (19.59-60) describes:

*channa-paṅke sthala-dhiyā patanti bahavo nanu
baidāla-vratiko 'py evaṁ saṅga-sambhaṣaṇārccanaiḥ*

Just as many fall into quicksand along the riverbank, mistaking it to be dry land, similarly, many spiritual aspirants are doomed by following hypocrites, who are like the cat who recites a vow to be a saintly vegetarian in order to attract the worship of the mice.

*ātmanaivopahasiṭā-mithyā-dhyāna-samādhibhiḥ
nirlajjāvañcayantī maṁ lokam dambhena-vañcitāḥ*

Mysore, early 19th century



Govinda

Although they make fools of themselves by pretending to perform meditation and trance, being without shame they cheat the people of this world through hypocrisy.

In his purport to *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (ādi 16.228), Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada has quoted the following verse:

*dharma-dhvajī sadālubdhaś chādmikoloka-dambhakah
vaidāla-vratiko jñeyo himsra-sarvābhisandhikah*

One should know that the *dharma-dhvajī* (who makes a false show of being religious), the person who always desires other's wealth, the duplicitous person, the person who cheats, the envious person, and the person who blasphemes are hypocritical brahmins who follow *vaidāla-vrata*, 'the vow of a cat'. (*Manu-saṁhitā* 4.195)

The cat in the story posed himself as a sincere spiritual aspirant, but his actual purpose was to kill and eat the baby birds in the tree. In his article entitled "Putana", Srila Saraswati Thakur has similarly compared the witch demoness who tried to kill baby Krishna by offering him poison on her breast to a false guru whose real purpose is to kill those who are babies in spiritual life:

Putana is the slayer of all infants. The baby, when he or she comes out of the mother's womb, falls at once into the hands of the pseudo-teachers of religion.

These teachers are successful in forestalling the attempts of the good preceptor, whose help is never sought by the atheists of this world at the baptisms of their babies. This is ensured by the arrangements of all established churches of the world. They have been successful only in supplying watchful Putanas for effecting the spiritual destruction of persons from the moment of their birth with the cooperation of their worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Putanas from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is due to the general prevalence of atheistic disposition in the people of this world.

In his *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* (3.2), Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has warned that devotees should be careful of such persons:

The devotee should give up the association of the devotee-pretender, understanding him to be a materialist. Towards those who are sincere, the devotee should offer service and respect. Meeting a true *vaiṣṇava*, the devotee should associate with him and serve him with his heart; to the ordinary *vaiṣṇava*-inclined people he should show respect. This respect is an external service.

These *vaiṣṇava*-like people are of three types: those who fully accept the *vaiṣṇava* conclusions but are not practicing themselves; those who take up the *vaiṣṇava* signs and appearance, but are not real *vaiṣṇavas*, though they have respect for the *vaiṣṇavas*; those who are born in the families of great *vaiṣṇavas*, and wear the signs of a *vaiṣṇava* but are not real *vaiṣṇavas*.

A true *vaiṣṇava* is measured by the degree of purity and depth of devotion, and his capacity to inspire others. A person attains the status of a real *vaiṣṇava* as soon as a little pure devotion appears in his heart. If a person respects and takes association of the non-*vaiṣṇava* in the same way that he respects the true *vaiṣṇava* or the ordinary *vaiṣṇava*, then his devotion will decrease. Thus, amongst those who wear the *vaiṣṇava* marks and appear to be *vaiṣṇavas*, certain ones should be avoided. These people should be satisfied with the respect due to all human beings, which is part of the secondary rules, but they should not be accepted or respected as real *vaiṣṇavas*. If they happen to become pure devotees, then they are also qualified for association with other pure devotees.

False *vaiṣṇavas* are those who wear the *vaiṣṇava* marks for the purpose of cheating, those who identify themselves as followers of the *vaiṣṇava ācāryas* for the purpose of introducing *advaita* philosophy to the *vaiṣṇavas*, and those who advertise themselves as *vaiṣṇavas* to gain money, position or some other material enjoyment.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada and his disciple Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Prabhupada were not blind to such cat-like pseudo spiritualists, yet they welcomed everyone into the ranks of their movement. One may wonder why they did so. Upon contemplation, one can see that these powerful preachers took shelter of two “secret” weapons to overcome the demoniac tendencies of such *dharma-dhvajī* followers — the holy name and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. They were both well aware of the supreme potency of these two items in purifying wrongs and establishing truth. As stated in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (8.23.16):

*mantrataś tantrataś chidraṁ deśa-kālārha-vastutaḥ
sarvaṁ karoti niśchidraṁ anusāṅkirtanaṁ tava*

There may be discrepancies in pronouncing the mantras and observing the regulative principles, and, moreover, there may be discrepancies in regard to time, place, person and paraphernalia. But when your Lordship’s holy name is chanted, everything becomes faultless.

Similarly, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada once instructed the GBC body of ISKCON:

“This chanting should go on. Instead of meetings, resolutions, dissolutions, revolutions and then no solutions, there should be chanting.” [From *Lilāmṛta* Vol.6 p.182]

They understood that as long as the holy name and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* were prominent in their society then all mistakes would ultimately be corrected. As stated



Early Bengal School, 20th century

Radha Krishna with Lalita

in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.5.11), *tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo* — the nature of the transcendental words of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is that they will always bring about a revolution in the lives of the people in general. —MD

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SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

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Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 303

Śrī Pāṇḍava Nirjala Ekādaśī

20 June 2013

Circulation 6,490

Highlights

- **A LITTLE LEARNING IS DANGEROUS**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **PRABHUPADA IS STILL DIRECTING**

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

- **BHIMA MEETS HANUMAN**

Adapted from the Vana-parva of Mahābhārata

- **MY DESIRE**

By the medieval poet Sri Gopal Das



A LITTLE LEARNING IS DANGEROUS

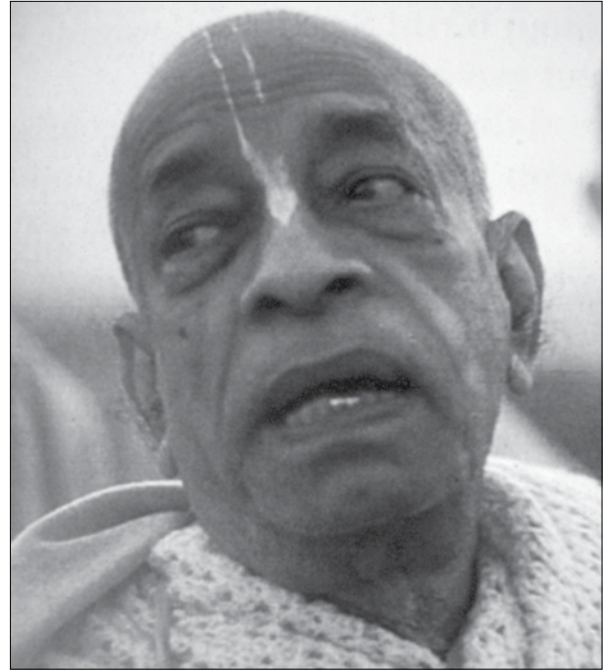
His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I am finding that if any of our students artificially try to become scholars by associating with unwanted persons, they become victimized, for a little learning is dangerous, especially for the Westerners. I am seeing that as soon as they begin to learn a little Sanskrit, immediately they feel that they have become more than their guru and then the policy is kill guru — and be killed himself.

So we shall have to teach character and spiritual understanding to the young children. To study other things as a high grade scholar is secondary for us. The first thing is to build up character and be experienced in the understanding of the conclusions of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. ॐ

— Letter to Dixit. 18 September 1976.



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

PRABHUPADA IS STILL DIRECTING

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Devotee: Why are there so many conflicting ideas for the ISKCON movement?

Gour Govinda Swami: Bah, stop it! There is no conflict. No conflict. No conflict. You are a mad fellow! There is no conflict, no confusion. It is all clear, bābā! Conflict and confusion are within you. Therefore you see conflict. If you put on yellow glasses, everything looks yellow. A man sees the

reflection of his mind. In your mind there is conflict and confusion, and therefore you see it outside.

When Hanuman went to Ravana's capital Lanka, he was extremely angry because the demon Ravana had kidnapped his master's wife, Sita. Out of anger, Hanuman's eyes were red hot. Ravana had kept Sita in a very lovely garden, called the Ashok Van. Aśoka means, "no lamentation". That garden was extremely beautiful. Ravana had brought so many varieties of nice flowers,

fruits, and birds from the heavenly planets. In that garden were many wonderful ponds and springs. Hanuman went there, but he saw no variety. He saw everything red, because anger was inside him. His eyes were red hot. Do you understand? Are your doubts clear?

Devotee: No.

Gour Govinda Swami: No? Why not?

Devotee: For instance, when Srila Prabhupada was directly present, everything in ISKCON was under his direction.

Gour Govinda Swami: He is still directing, but you can't see it. You have no vision. It will take time for you to understand. Be patient and wait, wait, wait. All these problems are inside you. The conflict is within you. Therefore you see such things outside. ॐ

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar on 23 March 1993.

BHIMA MEETS HANUMAN

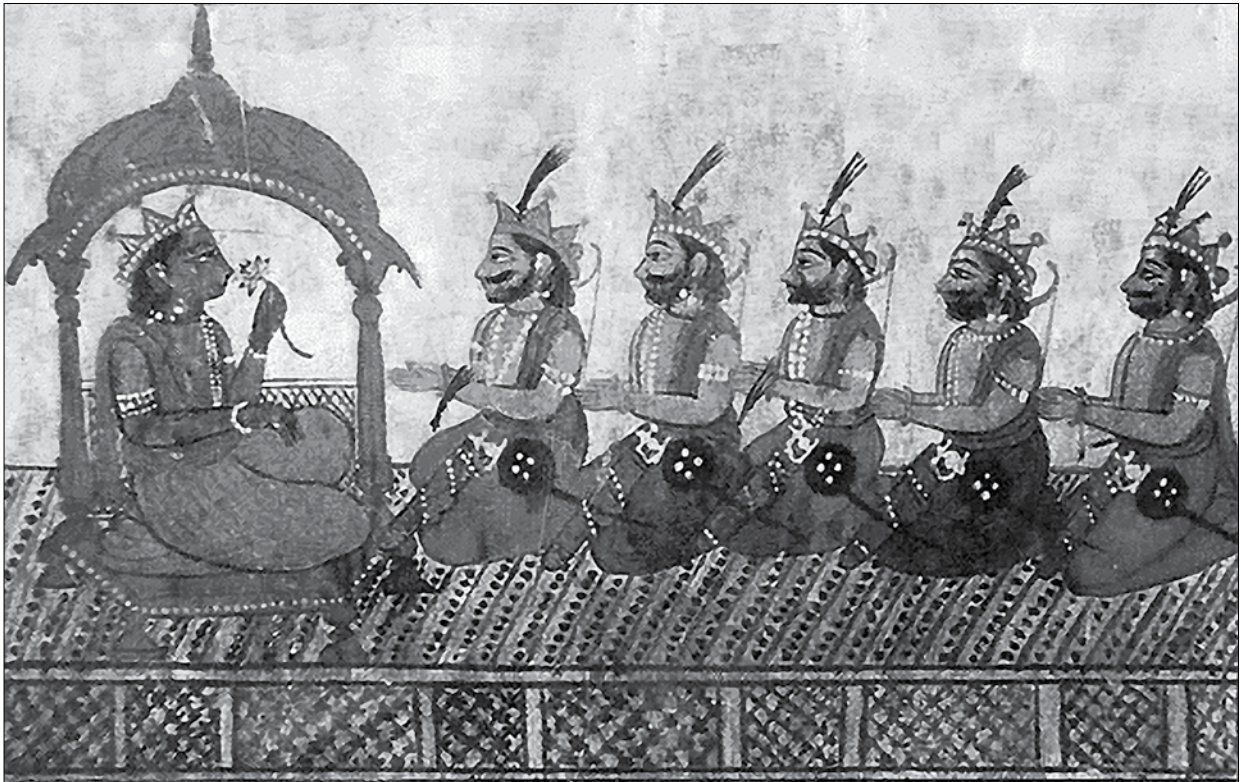
Adapted from the Vana-parva of Mahābharata

As the Pandavas made their way from one holy *tīrtha* to another, they finally came to Badrikashrama in the Himalayan Mountains. It was a very scenic spot that could hardly be described in words. The flowers that bloomed there could not be found anywhere else in the world. One day, as Draupadi was gazing on the

beautiful scenery, a strong wind arose and blew a thousand-petaled lotus flower into her lap. The flower had a celestial effulgence, a captivating aroma, and its beauty was unearthly. She took the flower to Bhima and requested, “Behold, O Bhima, this most celestial flower. O repressor of the foes, it has gladdened my heart. I shall present this one to Yudhisthira. Will you also obtain others for my satisfaction so that I may carry them to our hermitage in Kamyaka?”

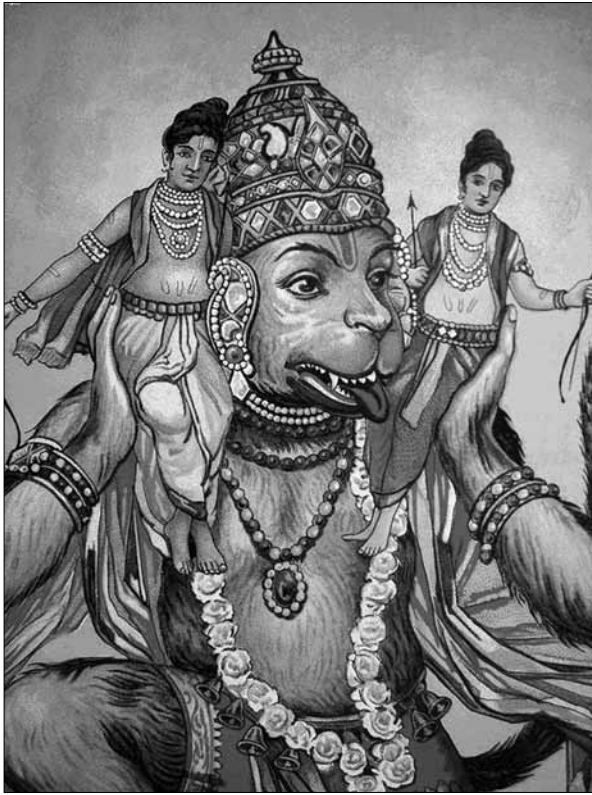
Bhima was delighted to please Draupadi in some way, and he proceeded to follow the path the scented flower had left. He traced the perfumed air for some time, and suddenly he realized he had covered a long distance. When he blew his conch shell, rousing the lions in the area, he then heard a loud pounding that caused the earth to tremble.

As Bhima approached that pounding sound, which was like a challenge to him, he suddenly saw a huge monkey lying on a stone slab. The monkey was waving his tail in the air and dashing it against the ground, causing the tremendous noise that spread in all directions. Bhima was completely amazed, for he had never seen a monkey like this before. The monkey was sitting there with half-opened eyes, calmly blocking the way. As Bhima approached, the monkey advised him,



Krishna and the Pandavas

Lithograph, Ravi Varma studios, c. 1920



Hanuman carrying Rama and Lakshman on his shoulders

“Young man, why do you make so much noise? Most of the animals in this region were sleeping peacefully, and now you have awakened them. Please be more considerate, and do not be so cruel to the inhabitants of this region. Beyond this point, the forest is impassable. It is a path leading to heaven and cannot be taken by ordinary mortals. Rest awhile here and eat some fruits. After your fatigue is relieved, you may return to your residence.”

Bhima was surprised that the monkey could talk like a human being, and questioned him, “May I know who you are? What monkey speaks like a human being? You must be some demigod in disguise. As for myself, I am the son of Vayu, and my mother is the chaste Kunti. My name is Bhima, and I am one of the Pandavas.” Bhima then told him the history of how they were exiled to the forest. He also informed the monkey that at the present moment they were waiting for the return of their brother Arjuna from the heavenly planets. The monkey smiled when Bhima told him all this, and said, “I know that I am obstructing your path, but I have become ill and cannot move. If you want my advice, you should return via the path by which you came.”

Bhima’s eyes reddened in anger, and he became very impatient. “I do not want your advice,” he said.

“Move out of my way, or I will have to move you myself.”

The monkey replied, “I have grown too old to move and most of the time I simply lie here. If you insist on going further, then you can do so by leaping over my body.”

Bhima was becoming frustrated with the whole matter. He said to the monkey, “You are an elderly personality, and you are lying on my path. It is not proper for me to jump over your body, for the Supreme Soul exists in everyone. It is also disrespectful to elders. If I had not known that Supreme Lord exists in everyone’s heart, then I would have leapt over your body and this mountain as the great Hanuman did when he crossed the sea to Lanka.”

The monkey inquired, “Who is this Hanuman who bounded over the ocean? You speak of him with respect. His name comes with affection from your mouth. Have you met him before? Can you relate something about him?”

The monkey looked at Bhima with a smirk on his face, and Bhima became furious. He exclaimed, “You are a monkey, and you do not know who Hanuman is? Hanuman is the greatest of all monkeys. He is also the son of the wind god Vayu and is, therefore, my esteemed brother. He is famed for his devotion to Lord Ramachandra. He is the illustrious chief of the monkeys, who is renowned in the Ramayana. When Lord Ramachandra lost his wife Sita, that brother of mine leaped across the sea to Ravana’s abode and discovered her whereabouts. He then set the city of Lanka on fire. Later, he killed many *rākṣasa* generals in the battle of Lanka. He even carried a huge mountain from the Himalayas just to save the life of Lord Ramachandra’s brother, Lakshman. I am insignificant in comparison to his strength, but I am able to fight with you if I have to. I must proceed further into this forest, and you must clear the way.”

The monkey smiled calmly when he saw Bhima’s impatience. He said, “Please do not be angry with me. I tell you the truth when I say that I am too old to move from this spot. If my tail obstructs your path, then just move it aside and go on your way.”

Bhima, thinking that the monkey was failing in energy, thought, “I will take hold of his tail and throw this monkey, destitute of strength, to Yamaraja’s abode.” Assured of his prowess, and smiling, Bhima approached the tail, and with his left hand he tried to move the tail as if it were a twig on the ground,

but the tail would not move. He tried with both hands, but still he could not lift the tail. He tried again and again, but still he could not budge the tail so much as an inch. The monkey was smiling in amusement, which only increased Bhima's anger. Bhima tried repeatedly to lift the monkey's tail till his face was completely red, his eyebrows tightened, his eyes rolled, his face was contracted in wrinkles, and his body was covered with sweat. Finally, Bhima had to admit his defeat. He went before the monkey and prostrated himself, saying, "Please forgive my harsh words. Out of ignorance I have transgressed the conduct of good behavior to elders. Your power is greater than mine, and therefore, you must be some demigod descended from the higher regions. Please tell me who you are."

The monkey smiled at him and said, "I will gladly tell you who I am. I am the son of the wind god, Hanuman." With these words, they tightly embraced each other, and tears of joy came from their eyes. They talked for a long time, and Bhima was thrilled beyond words that he had finally met his brother, whom he had only heard about previously. Before their departure, Hanuman bestowed a boon on Bhima,

*vijayasya dhvajasthaś ca nādān mokṣyāmi dāruṇān
śatrūṇān ye prāṇa-harāḥ sukhaṁ yena haniṣyatha*



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"Staying on the victory flag [of Arjuna], I will shout out fiercely in such a way that it will make the enemies almost lifeless, and thus it will be easy for you to kill them."

After Hanuman gave this boon to the Pandavas, the brothers embraced and departed. 🙏

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MY DESIRE

Sri Gopal Das

(*Dhānaśī-rāga*)

*hari hari āmāra emana kabe habe
viṣaya dāruṇa viṣa jañjāla chuṭibe*

Hari! Hari! When will I escape from the power of this horrible poison?

*dārā-sukha-bhoge mu-i ha-iba virakta
śaraṇa la-iba śuka vaiṣṇava bhāgavata*

When will I renounce the joys of household life and take shelter of Srila Sukadev Goswami, the *vaiṣṇavas*, and the *Bhāgavatam*?

*karaṅga kothali hāte galāya kānthā diyā
mādhukarī māgi khāba vraja-vāsī haiyā*

When, residing in Vraja with a patchwork cloth around my neck and a bowl in my hand, will I eat by begging as a *mādhukarī*?

*saṁsāra-sukhera mukhe anala jvāliyā
thu thu kariyā kabe yā-iba chāḍiyā*

When will I spit far away the flames of material sense gratification that burn in my mouth?

*jāti kula abhimāna sakala chāḍiba
gopālera āśā kata divase phaliba*

When will I renounce my family, social station, pride, and everything else? Ah! After how many days will Gopal's desire be fulfilled? 🙏

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— *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, fourth edition, April 2010. Compiled and edited by Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay. Published by Shishu Sahitya Sansad Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata.





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 304

Śrī Yoginī Ekādaśī

3 July 2013

Circulation 6,512

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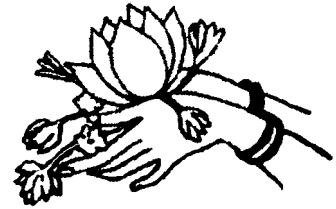
Hitopadeśa of Vadiraj Tirtha

- **WHEN THE LORD IS MERCIFUL ...**

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- **NO OTHER NEED**

A verse from Mokṣa-dharma

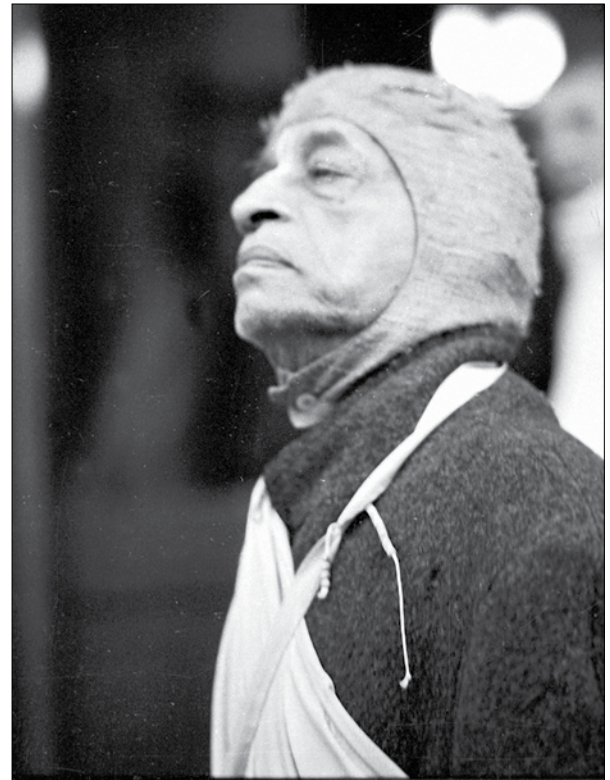


A SINGLE SINCERE SOUL

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I have seen your statement regarding opening centers. I am not in agreement with Mr. Altman that we are expanding very thinly. In my opinion a single sincere soul can maintain a center. You know I started the center at 26 Second Avenue alone. I took the risk of \$200 per month for the rent. At that time there were no assistants. Still I was maintaining an establishment simply depending on Krishna, and then Krishna sent me everything, men and money. Similarly, if a sincere soul goes out and opens a center in any part of the world, Krishna will help him in all respects. Without being empowered by Krishna, nobody can preach Krishna consciousness. It is not academic qualification or financial strength which helps in the matter, but sincerity of purpose. In this way, you will follow my example as I did in the beginning at 26 Second Avenue. That is preaching; cooking, writing, talking, chanting, everything a one man show. I never thought about the audience. I was prepared to chant even if there was no one to hear me. The principle of chanting is to glorify the Lord and not to attract a crowd. If Krishna hears nicely then he will ask some sincere devotees to gather in



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

such place. Therefore, my advice is that thousands of centers may be started if we find just one sincere soul for each and every center. ॐ

— Letter to Subala. 12 November 1967.

SRINIVAS ACHARYA MEDITATES ON GAURA-LILA

*Adapted from chapter 6 of Srila Narahari
Chakravarti Thakur's Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara*

One day in a very secluded place, Srinivas meditated on the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is like a moon shining in Nabadwip.

*brahmādi-vandita navadvīpa ramyasthāna
vasantādi chaya rtu sadā mūrtimān*

Brahma and the demigods offer obeisances to beautiful Nabadwip where the six seasons personified, with springtime personified as their leader, are always manifest. (Text 129)

*śobhaye vividha vrkṣalatā puṣpamaya
kokilādi-śabde sarvacitta ākarṣaya*

In Nabadwip the flower-filled trees and vines are beautiful and glorious. The cooing of the cuckoos and other birds attracts every heart. (130)

*navadvīpa-madhye ki āścarya "māyāpura"
se-sthāna-darśane sarva tāpa yāya dūra*

In the middle of Nabadwip is the astonishing land of Mayapur. All sufferings flee far away from whoever sees that place. (131)

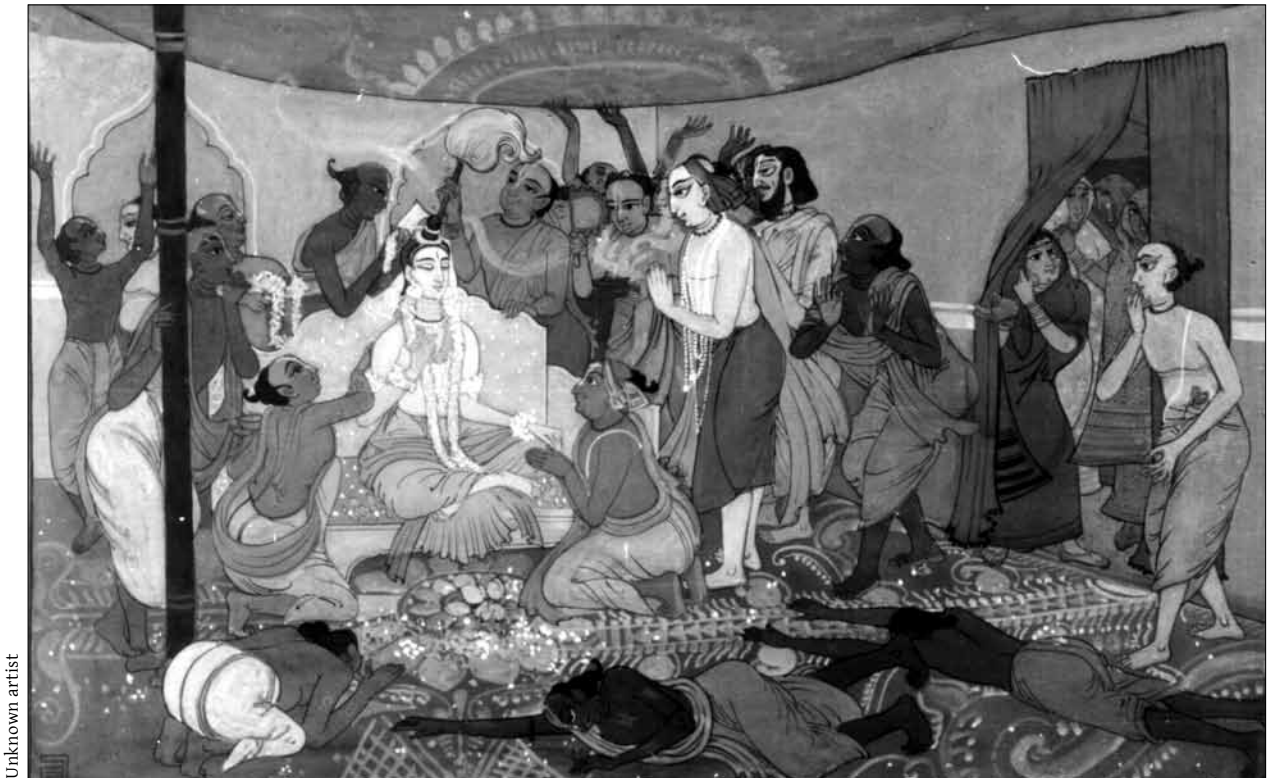
Srinivas saw Lord Gaurasundar surrounded by his dear associates, enjoying unprecedented blissful

pastimes as he sat on a wonderful *simhāsana* in that place. Suddenly Mahaprabhu gestured that Srinivas should come close. Srinivas then stood at the Lord's side, and with great care he anointed Mahaprabhu's graceful limbs with wonderful fragrant sandalwood paste. He then placed a garland of many different flowers around the Lord's neck, and with a joyful heart he began fanning the Lord with a *cāmara*.

Drinking the nectar of the moon of Lord Gaurasundara's face, Srinivas was overcome with emotion. In his ecstasy he forgot who he was. He began trembling and could not keep his body still. Tears of divine love flowed from his eyes. Various symptoms of ecstasy appeared on his body. Seeing the emotions of Srinivas, Mahaprabhu was very pleased.

Sri Gaurasundar then took off the flower garland from his own neck and gave it to Srinivas. When the garland touched him, Srinivas felt like he was swimming in an ocean of bliss.

Suddenly, Srinivas returned to external consciousness. When he opened his eyes and looked about, he saw around his neck the same garland that the Lord had given him in his vision. There was no limit to the beauty and fragrance of that garland. Bumblebees flew to it from every direction. Although Srinivas quickly tried to conceal the garland, someone saw it.



Unknown artist

ācāryera kārya saṅgopane niti niti
navadvīpa-vihāre nimagna divārāti

Srinivas Acharya always carefully concealed his activities. Day and night he was plunged in meditation on Mahaprabhu's pastimes in Nabadwip. (143) ॥

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“FRIENDLY ADVICE”

HITOPADEŚA OF VADIRAJ TIRTHA

Srila Vadiraj Tirtha was an ācārya in the Madhva sampradāya. He was born in 1480 in a Brahmin family and took sannyāsa at the age of eight. Some say that he was a student or disciple of Vyasa Tirtha. Vadiraj Tirtha was a great scholar and one of the most famous poets in the Madhva line. It is said that he spoke in poetry, thought in poetry, and argued his points in poetry. He wrote twenty-three major works and a hundred or so stotras, Sanskrit poems. He is said to have lived 120 years. Hitopadeśa, literally “friendly advice”, is five verses of essential wisdom.

smara kṛṣṇam bhaja harim nama viṣṇum śrayācyutam
tyaja kāmam jaya krodham jahi moham bhavālayam

Remember Krishna! Sing of Hari! Offer obeisances to Vishnu! Take shelter of Achyuta! Give up lust! Defeat anger! Win over this world of delusion!

śṛṇu śauri kathāḥ puṇyāḥ paśya śrīpati vīgraham
jighra śrīpāda tulasīḥ spr̥ṣa vaikunṭha vallabham

Listen to the blissful tales of Krishna! See the deity of the Lord of Lakshmi! Taste the tulasī leaves which have adorned his feet! Make the master of Vaikuntha ones own!

bhukṣva keśava naivedyam tiṣṭha mādharma mandire
japa nārāyaṇa-manuṁ paṭha tan nāma maṅgalam

Honor the prasādam of Kesava! Reside in the temple of Madhava! Meditate on the name of Narayan! Recite his auspicious names!

pāhi prapanna janatām drūhi tathyaṁ hitam nṛṇām
jehi kāntitam arthibhyoḥ yāhi sajjana-saṅgatim

Take the counsel of the wise! Always keep ones ultimate welfare in mind! Give up adoration of the glow of wealth! Seek the company of good people!

kuru bhūta dayāṁ nityaṁ cara dharmam ahar niṣam
jānīḥ nityam ātmānam avekhyannaddhi naśvaram



Unknown artist

Krishna gets lessons in playing flute

Always carry out acts of kindness to others! Follow the rules of dharma without fail! Know that the self is eternal and all else is transient!

pañca ślokaṁ imāṁ śāśvat paṭha dhāraya cīntaya
etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ samāśena nirūpitah

One should read and think about this composition of five ślokas. In them, the purport of all the Vedas has been condensed and explained.

nāsti nārāyaṇa-samam na bhūtam na bhaviṣyati
etena satyavākyena sarvārthān sādhyāmy aham

Knowing that there is no one equal to Narayan, that there was no one equal to him in the past and that there will be no one equal to him in the future, I will achieve everything. ॥

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WHEN THE LORD IS MERCIFUL ...

The medieval Gaudiya poet Radhamohan Das

(Gurjarī-rāga)

kabe prabhura anugraha haba
viṣaya-bāsanā-pāśa kabe mora habe nāśa
kabe āmi vṛndāvane yāba

(Refrain)When will the Lord be merciful to me?
When will the noose of material desires around my
neck be cut? When will I go to Vrindavan?

*e saṁsāre duḥkha-phala se ānande mahābala
jāniyā yāiba sei sthāne
sarva duḥkha palāibe gaḍāgaḍi diba yabe
rāsa-sthālī yamunā-puline*

The material world bears suffering as its only fruit.
I shall go to a place where I know that there is only
intense bliss. Then all material sufferings will flee
far away. I will roll on the ground at the *rāsa*-dance
arena on the Yamuna's banks.

*kr̥ṣṇa-mūrti govardhana mahā-bhāgya daraśana
mora kiye habe hena karma
kr̥ṣṇera rādhikā yaiche śrī kuṇḍa tāhāra taiche
kāya mane kabe habe marma*

If I become fortunate I will see the deity of
Krishna on Govardhan Hill. Will I be able to do
that? When will my body, mind, and heart run to
Radhakund and Shyamakund?

*kuṇḍa-yuge snāna kari seikhāne yadi mari
tabe bujhi mora habe gati
tumi prabhu dayāmaya e rādhā-mohana kaya
siddha kara ei ta kākuti*

I know the destination that I will attain if I bathe
in those two *kuṇḍas* and die there. Radhamohan Das



Gita Press painting by B. K. Mitra

"Bhakti"

says, "O Lord, you are very merciful. Please grant me
these perfections. I beg this of you." ॐ

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NO OTHER NEED

Mokṣa-dharma

*yā vai sādhanā-sampatti puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaye
tayā vinā tad āpnoti naro nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ*

A person who takes shelter of Lord Narayan
need not perform any separate activities for
achieving religiosity, economic development, sense
gratification, or liberation. ॐ

— Quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 180.15 and *Paramātmā-sandarbha* 1.22.
Translated by Kusakratha Das.



SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 305

Śrī Śayanā Ekādaśī

19 July 2013

Circulation 6,500

Highlights

• DOLL DISPLAYS

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• GENERAL RULES FOR CATURMASYA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• WHO IS A BRAHMIN?

Adapted from **Bhaviṣya-purāṇa**



DOLL DISPLAYS

**His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

We want to display doll exhibitions in every center of our society depicting some narration from the *Bhāgavatam*, *Mahābhārata*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, or *Bhagavad-gītā*, etc. Just like the picture of Arjuna's chariot driven by Krishna between the two groups of soldiers, the pictures are already there in our books, and they are to be demonstrated by doll exhibitions. (Letter to Rupanuga Das, 9 May 1973.)

You mention that Saptaratha Prabhu is in our Buffalo project making a nice doll display for the temple. You should tell him that others should also learn from him how to make these dolls. We have to make these doll displays for our temples all over the world on many different subject matters from the scriptures. It is a very nice way of attracting all people, especially in the West. (Letter to Rupanuga Das, 18 December 1974.)

So far as your future plans are concerned, you should understand that at every center there should be such doll exhibitions. Wherever it is suitable, you should take that up first. In the new New York building, one flat should be for this exhibition. (Letter to Baradraja Das, 18 November 1975.)

Upon seeing the pictures of the doll exhibit I thought it was some of our devotees play-acting! This boy Saptaratha Das has done the dolls very, very nicely. Now make a museum for the public. This doll making was one of the programs of my Guru Maharaja, and the



His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

exhibit used to tour India. That same exhibit, although falling apart, is still touring India today and people are appreciating it. So develop this program. I am very pleased with this boy's work. Encourage him. (Letter to Rupanuga Das, 7 December 1975.)

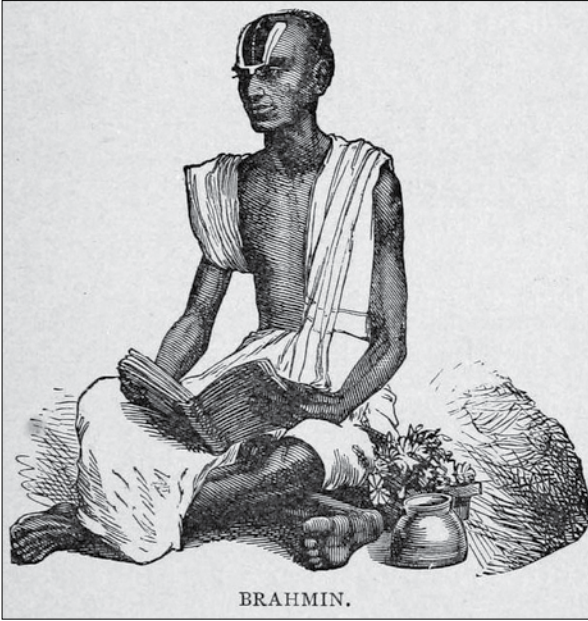
GENERAL RULES FOR CATURMASYA

**Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakur Prabhupada**

The rule for following *ūrjā-vrata*, or *caturmāsya*, is that one must avoid non-vegetarian foods, like urad dal, betel nuts, kidney beans, and stale foods. One must not deviate from following whatever resolution he has

made for that period, such as chanting a prescribed number of rounds or rendering some special devotional service. The general rule is that one should offer simple boiled vegetarian food to the Supreme Lord and honor the *prasādam*. One should also give up laziness, too much sleeping, non-*vaiṣṇava* behavior, and shaving the head or face, and one should take bath daily and practice celibacy. (Letter from Sri Bhaktivinode Asan, Ultadanga Junction Road. 10 January 1919.)

— Excerpted from *Patrāmṛta, Nectar from the Letters*, p. 21. Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2012.



Unknown artist British illustration from 1876

WHO IS A BRAHMIN?

Adapted from the Bhaviṣya-purāṇa

King Shatanik asked Sumantu Muni whether caste is determined by birth or by actions, and Sumantu Muni replied by relating a conversation between Lord Brahma and all the great sages on the same topic.

The great sages asked Lord Brahma, “Seeing that Vishwamitra became a *brāhmaṇa* from the *kṣatriya* caste, our minds are in a great doubt. What exactly makes one a *brāhmaṇa*? Is it the nature of the soul, is it due to birth, to study of the Vedas, to bodily features, to previous *saṁskāras* and performance of Vedic rites — what exactly is the cause of one being a *brāhmaṇa*? If it is said that the soul is a *brāhmaṇa*, then it is seen that the soul migrates in a variety of species of life such as *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*, *cāṇḍāla*, dog, hog, etc. How then can the soul be a *brāhmaṇa*? Unlike a horse that can be easily distinguished in a herd of cows, the *brāhmaṇa* cannot be

readily distinguished in a group of humans. Therefore, please tell us exactly what makes one a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Hearing their question, Lord Brahma replied, “O greatest amongst sages! Please hear the story of the seven hunters that was previously narrated by Manu, as it relieves all doubt regarding whether the soul is a *brāhmaṇa*:

“In the province named Dasharna there were seven hunters. In their next lives they became deer in the Kalanjar Hill, and in the next they became *cakravāka* birds in Sharadwip. In the life after that they became swans in Mansarovar, and then they became Vedic *brāhmaṇas* in Kurukshetra. Therefore the soul can never be termed as a *brāhmaṇa*.

“Unlike a *nīlagāya* cow, which can be differentiated from an ordinary cow by seeing the skin hanging from its neck, a *brāhmaṇa* cannot be distinguished from the other castes by any natural bodily features.

“If a *brāhmaṇa* becomes a caretaker of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, camels, donkeys, mules, horses, or elephants; if a *brāhmaṇa* consumes flesh, garlic, onions, camel milk, or liquor; if a *brāhmaṇa* sells meat, salty drinks, or milk; if a *brāhmaṇa* enters into a physical relationship with a woman who has been married twice, with a *śūdra* lady, a *cāṇḍālī*, or a servant girl; if a *brāhmaṇa* consumes grains cooked by a *śūdra* or from a funeral ceremony; if a *brāhmaṇa* becomes envious of the demigods, his parents, or his guru — then due to any of the above, even a *brāhmaṇa* who is well versed in the Vedas and its branches loses his status as a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore, being a *brāhmaṇa* is not the permanent asset of a material body. Manu has already said that a *brāhmaṇa* who cultivates fields or who works as a servant or as a *vaiśya* becomes just like a *śūdra*. Similarly, one may also attain the position of a *brāhmaṇa* from the position of a *śūdra*.”

Lord Brahma continued, “O greatest amongst sages! By reading the Vedas one doesn’t become a *brāhmaṇa*. After all, Ravana and other demons also read the Vedas. Moreover, some who are by nature *śūdras*, *cāṇḍālas*, or fishermen manage to read the Vedas by fraud, but they can’t be termed as true *brāhmaṇas*. Many such *śūdras* migrate to other locations and disguise themselves as *brāhmaṇas* to read the Vedas and marry a *brāhmaṇa* girl. Or in the five countries known as *pañca-gauḍa* or *pañca-draviḍa*, some who have not even read the Vedas pretend to be *brāhmaṇas* and marry in a high lineage. Therefore, a mere recitation of the Vedas is not a proclamation of being of the nature of a *brāhmaṇa*. This is also true

because the previous great authorities say that one devoid of good character cannot even be purified by reading the Vedas along with all the six *vedāṅgas*. Reading the Vedas is the culture of the *brāhmaṇas*, but their character is what matters most.

“Even there are some *śūdras* who start carrying a *daṇḍa* (rod), deerskin, *mekhalā* (girdle), *brāhmaṇa* thread, etc., and nobody can stop them from doing so. *Śūdras* can also cast spells and mantras, and they too can perform austerities and please the demigods to attain their favor and to attain perfection in a *mantra*. The potency to be able to overcome curses also manifests in the *śūdras* through austerities. All these are common for both *brāhmaṇas* and *śūdras*. Even the *saṁskāras* (purificatory rituals) are not the cause of being a *brāhmaṇa*, for no one performed *saṁskāras* such as *garbhādhāna*, *sīmanta*, etc., for Vyasa and many other sages.

“The bodies of all humans are the same. On the contrary, the *mlecchas* and atheists of the other countries are seen to have stronger bodies. In terms of the body, soul, speaking capacity, happiness, prosperity, disease, giving orders, strength, bodily figure, activities of the sense organs, life, weakness, strength, fickleness, gravity, intelligence, detachment, religiosity, chivalry, beauty, unclean condition within the womb, effulgence, bones, flesh, bodily hair, skin and in terms of an interest in the goals of life, it is seen that in many ways *śūdras* are the same as *brāhmaṇas*. Therefore, even the demigods are unable to differentiate between a *brāhmaṇa* and a *śūdra* in all these regards. It is also not that the *brāhmaṇas* are white in complexion like the moon-rays, neither are the *kṣatriyas* reddish like the forest flame, neither are the *vaiśyas* yellowish like the yellow *haritāla* pigeon, neither are the *śūdras* blackish like coal. Their activities, speech, happiness, and distress are all the same, so why should they be distinguished by birth? All are created equal by the Lord and all are his sons and daughters. Just like all the fruits of a tree are the same, all the humans created by the Lord are the same.

Coming in lineages descended from Kaushik, Kashyap, Gautam, Kaundinya, Mandavya, Vasistha, Atreya, Kautsa, Angira, Garga, Maudgalya, Katyayana, Bhargava, Bharadwaj, etc. also does not the cause one to be a *brāhmaṇa*, for these lineages are also found even amongst the other castes.

If you say that the body is the *brāhmaṇa*, then you should determine first if any limb of the body is a *brāhmaṇa* or the entire body. If a single limb is a

brāhmaṇa then the amputation of that limb will be the end of one's being a *brāhmaṇa*. If the entire body is considered as the *brāhmaṇa* then after the demise of the body, he who burns the body will become the killer of a *brāhmaṇa*. If you say that by marrying the daughter of a *brāhmaṇa* one becomes a *brāhmaṇa*, then the same *brāhmaṇa* when later marries a *kṣatriya* girl should no longer remain a *brāhmaṇa*. It is enjoined in the scriptures that a *brāhmaṇa* can marry a girl from any of the four castes, so all these factors cannot be the cause of being a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Lord Brahma continued — “O great sages! Pride of beauty, wealth, knowledge and caste is useless, for the soul migrates continuously in different appearances, such as plants, aquatics, ants, bees, elephants, exactly like a professional actor. How then can one be proud of one's caste? Therefore an intelligent man should not be proud of his caste, for it is transitory. Neither does one become a *brāhmaṇa* by rituals such as *garbhādhāna*, *pūṁsavana*, *sīmanta*, *jātakarma*, *anna-prāśana*, *yajñopavīta*, *vedādhyaṇa*, *samāvartana*, *vivāha*, because these *saṁskāras* are not seen to be the cause of one's increased lifespan or increased effulgence. Neither is it seen that those who are without these *saṁskāras* are of a decreased lifespan or effulgence. Both experience similar happiness and distress. It is seen often that those who have had all the good *saṁskāras* fall away from their good qualities and become rogues, whereas those who have no *saṁskāras* attain to the path of religious life and heaven. It is fully possible for a person with all *saṁskāras* to become addicted to gambling, prostitution and other vices, and it is equally possible for a person without *saṁskāras* to perform *japa*, austerities, charity, etc. Thus they attain the highest posts. Therefore, even *saṁskāras* are not the cause of being a *brāhmaṇa*.

“If it is said that high parentage leads to *brāhminism*, then Vyasa was born from a fisherwoman, Parashara was born from a *śūdra* woman, Shuka was born a parrot, Kanad was born from an owl, Rishyashringa from a deer, Vasistha from a courtesan, Mandapal from a bush lark, Mandavya from a frog, etc. In this way many were born in lower wombs and attained the position of a *brāhmaṇa*. All of them had no *saṁskāras*, but on the power of their austerities they attained the position of a *brāhmaṇa*. If one performs austerities and cultivates knowledge, proper

behavior and culture, then one born in a lower caste becomes a *brāhmaṇa*, and on the other hand if one who already has all these performs sinful activities then he become degraded from the position of a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore being a *brāhmaṇa* is not a fixed characteristic but a fleeting one.”

Lord Brahma continued, “One should ask the proud so-called reciters of the Vedas how it is that this body, developed from sperm and a storehouse of nasty objects like stool, can be purified? There are some who are extremely well versed in Vedic rituals but become degraded to the worst extent. So called *brāhmaṇas* who exhibit cruelty, kill other *brāhmaṇas*, have sex with their guru’s wife, thieves, killers of cows, drunkards, have attraction to other’s wives, liars, atheists, those affected by *kali-yuga*, as well as vile persons who eat anything and sell anything cannot be purified even though imbued with all *saṁskāras* and Vedic studies. Whatever disasters happen to *śūdras* happen to *brāhmaṇas* as well. Therefore, reading the Vedas and performing animal sacrifices are not characteristics of being a *brāhmaṇa*. Widowhood, death, etc., are all equal to all castes. Bodily imbalances such as *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* are present in all bodies, and everyone yearns for wealth. Those *brāhmaṇas* who make a pretense of

reading the Vedas and cheat the world and maintain themselves are worse than the *śūdras*.

“A *brāhmaṇa* can impregnate a *śūdra* woman and a *brāhmaṇa* lady gets impregnated by a *śūdra* man. How can the birth body therefore be a cause of difference? The body or birth is indeed a cause of difference in the animals such as cows, horses and elephants because it is seen that an animal of one category cannot produce a child in another animal. The bull cannot produce a calf in a horse. If an animal has intercourse with a woman, there will be no offspring due to biological incompatibility. Therefore, the word *jāti* (caste difference by birth) is applicable in the context of animals and not in the context of humans. The so called conception of caste by birth in humans is merely a mental speculation. It does not have factual existence.”

Lord Brahma concluded — “One who knows what should be accepted and what should not be accepted, who gives up dishonest means and aims for controlling the senses, who is both truthful and lawful as well as being fixed in good behavior, who thinks of the welfare of all, who knows well the Vedas and its six *vedāṅgas*, who is devoid of anger, envy, delusion, etc., who is attracted to the study of Vedas and other literature, who doesn’t associate with materialistic people, who stays in a clean place, who is equal in happiness and distress, who is true to religion, who is freed from the conception of I and mine, who is free from pride, who is charitable, a knower of *brahman*, and who is peaceful and austere — such a person is to be known as a *brāhmaṇa*. Such *brāhmaṇas* have been produced for the welfare of the world.”

Lord Brahma therefore concluded, *bhaktiāsaktāḥ prapannās ca brāhmaṇās te prakīrtitāḥ* — “Those who are sheltered in the absolute truth through devotion and attachment are known as *brāhmaṇas*.”

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SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 306

Śrī Kāmikā Ekādaśī

02 August 2013

Circulation 6,520

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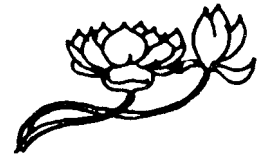
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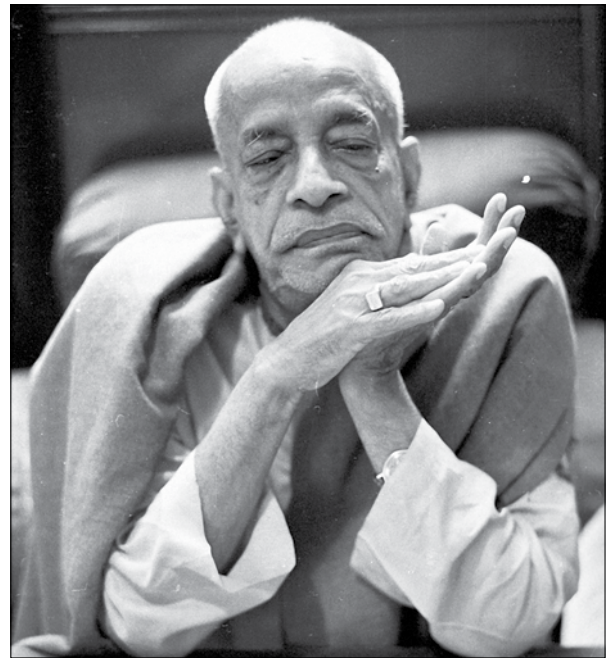
THE KAMA-GAYATRI

**His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

Lord Krishna is worshiped by the *gāyatrī* mantra, and the specific mantra by which He is worshiped is called *kāma-gāyatrī*. Vedic literatures explain that that sound vibration which can elevate one from mental concoction is called *gāyatrī*. The *kāma-gāyatrī* mantra is composed of 24½ syllables thus — *klīm kāmā-devāya vidmahe puṣpa-bāṇāya dhīmahi tan no 'naṅgaḥ pracodayāt*.

This *kāma-gāyatrī* is received from the spiritual master when the disciple is advanced in chanting *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. In other words, this *kāma-gāyatrī* mantra and *saṁskāra*, or reformation of a perfect *brāhmaṇa*, are offered by the spiritual master when he sees that his disciple is advanced in spiritual knowledge. Even then, the *kāma-gāyatrī* is not uttered under certain circumstances. In any case, the chanting of Hare Krishna is sufficient to elevate one to the highest spiritual platform. (*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, chapter 31.)

The *kāma-gāyatrī* mantra is just like a Vedic hymn, but it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself. There is no difference between the *kāma-gāyatrī* and Krishna. Both are composed of twenty-four and a



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

half transcendental syllables. The mantra depicted in letters is also Krishna, and the mantra rises just like the moon. Due to this, there is a perverted reflection of desire in human society and among all kinds of living entities. In the mantra *klīm kāmā-devāya vidmahe puṣpa-bāṇāya dhīmahi tan no 'naṅgaḥ pracodayāt*, Krishna is

called *kāma-deva*, *puṣpa-bāṇa* and *anaṅga*. *Kāma-deva* is *madana-mohana*, the deity who establishes our relationship with Krishna; *puṣpa-bāṇa* (“he who carries an arrow made of flowers”) is Govinda, the Personality of Godhead who accepts our devotional service; and *anaṅga* is *gopījana-vallabha*, who satisfies all the *gopīs* and is the ultimate goal of life. This *kāma-gāyatrī* simply does not belong to this material world. When one is advanced in spiritual understanding he can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead with his spiritually purified senses and fulfill the desires of the Lord. (Purport to *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, *madhya* 3.138.)

DON'T DISTURB GAURA'S MOOD

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Can you put a flute on Gaura? Although he is Krishna, you cannot put a flute on Gaura. Similarly, how can you put a peacock feather on he who is crying for Krishna like Radharani? His mood will be disturbed. Although he is Krishna, Gaura's mood is different. Therefore Prabhupada has said, “Don't disturb the mood of Gauranga.”

It is very painful to Gaura. Our service is meant to



Deities of Nityananda, Mahaprabhu and Advaita Acharya installed by Srila Jiva Goswami in Ramakeli, West Bengal

give him pleasure, not pain. We are servants and we must render service to please him, not for our own pleasure. He is to be pleased. If we say, “Oh Gaura, a peacock feather is on your head. You are Krishna,”

then how can he cry? “Oh, I am Krishna? I cannot cry now.” (*Embankment of Separation*, pocket edition, p. 110.)



Deity of Mahaprabhu in Dhaneswar village Orissa, installed by Srila Narottam Das Thakur

Krishna incarnated himself in Nabadwip, assuming the mood and complexion of Radharani — *tānra kānti aṅgera bhūṣana* (Srila Narottam Das Thakur's *Premabhakti-candrikā* 9.13). That is Gauranga Mahaprabhu. His mood is mostly that of Radharani, not Krishna. If you are a *pūjārī* worshiping deities of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda, don't dress Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as Krishna. Don't put a peacock feather on his head. No. That is not pleasing to him. He thinks of himself as Radharani. A *pūjārī* should know all these things. Mahaprabhu thinks of himself as Radha. He says, “This is *rādhā-aṅga*, the body of Radharani. Only Krishna, *gopendra-suta*, can touch this body. No one else

can touch this body.” *Rādhā-bhāva* is the predominating mood in Gaura, not the *bhāva* of Krishna. No.

Gauranga Mahaprabhu has expressed his mood:
kva nanda-kula-candramāḥ kva śikhi-candrakālāṅkṛtiḥ
kva mandra-muralī-ravaḥ kva nu surendra-nīla-dyutiḥ
kva rāsa-rasa-tāṇḍavī kva sakhi-jīva-rakṣauśadhir
nidhir mama suhṛt-tamaḥ kva bata hanta hā dhig vidhim

Where is Krishna? Where is that moon rising from the ocean of Maharaja Nanda’s dynasty? Where is he whose head is decorated with a peacock feather? Where is Krishna, whose flute produces such a deep sound? Where is Krishna, who is so expert in dancing in the *rāsa* dance? Where is that Krishna, who is the medicine that can save my life?

In this way, Mahaprabhu was crying. As Radharani was crying, similarly Mahaprabhu was crying. So *rādhā-bhāva* is predominating in him. Not the *bhāva* of Krishna. So don’t dress Gauranga Mahaprabhu as Krishna. No. He’ll never be pleased. Though he is non-different from Krishna, still he is in Radharani’s mood. This is pleasing to Gauranga Mahaprabhu. (Lecture, Bhubaneswar, 27 April 1989.)

THE SERVICE OF SRILA NAROTTAM DAS THAKUR

*Adapted from chapter 6 of Srila Narahari
Chakravarti Thakur’s Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara*

One day Narottam Das Thakur sat down and began to meditate on Radha and Krishna. In the eye of his heart, Narottam saw the divine couple in a secluded grove in Vrindavan accompanied by their *gopī* friends enjoying pastimes with great bliss and love.

Radharani told one of her *sakhīs*, “Quickly bring a great quantity of food.” Lalita and the *gopīs* joyfully brought many preparations.

Narottam took on the form of a *gopī* maidservant. On the signal of one of the *sakhīs*, the maidservant Narottam began to prepare some milk. Seeing the boiling milk about to overflow, Narottam quickly took the milk-pot from the fire with his bare hands. The pot burned his hands, but Narottam didn’t notice. He gave the milk to a *gopī*.

Radha and Krishna blissfully enjoyed the milk, and Narottam took the remnants they left behind. Then Narottam returned to external consciousness.

dagdha hasta dṛṣṭa mātṛe kailā saṅgopana
jānīlena marma antaraṅga kon jana

Seeing that his hand was actually burned, Narottam quickly hid it. Still, someone else understood the secret of those pastimes. (175)

śrī narottamera yaiche mānasa-bhāvanā
tāhā vistāriyā vā kahibe kon janā?

Who can properly describe the devotional service Narottam performed in meditation? (176)

In his meditation, Narottam Das always wandered in Navadwip and Vrindavan. In the company of Srinivas Acharya, he was overcome with bliss.

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HUMILITY

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda

Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava is a collection of the teachings of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda compiled by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinoda, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and published in 1938. The book is in the form of a series of questions composed by the compiler, with answers extracted from Thakur Bhaktivinoda’s teachings. The following are some extracts from chapter 90.

What mentality should a devotee maintain?

A devotee should always maintain humility within his heart. (*Śrī Bhāgavatārka Marīci Mālā*)

What is humility?

I am a servant of Krishna. I am poor and do not possess anything. Krishna is my all-in-all. This is humility. (*Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 8)

What type of devotional service helps us directly cultivate Krishna consciousness?

When one’s humility is strong, one certainly attains Krishna’s mercy. As a result, any debauchery or any desire for profit, adoration, and distinction are immediately destroyed. This helps one to directly cultivate Krishna consciousness. This process is naturally confidential, and one must learn how to practice it from a bona fide spiritual master. (*Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* 6.6)

How is actual humility expressed?

I am a pure spirit soul. Due to my previous misdeeds, I am suffering from various material miseries. I am a proper candidate for punishment.

Even though I am Krishna's eternal servant, due to my forgetfulness of his lotus feet I have become trapped on the wheel of karma. Now I have to suffer so much misery! Thus, who is more unfortunate than me? I am the most fallen, wretched, and poor person. (*Sajjana Toṣaṇī* 4.9)

What is the spontaneous prayer of the pure devotee?

This ocean is full of fearful crocodiles in the form of material sense objects. The waves of lusty desires always agitate me. My mind is restless because I do not see any captain. (*Kalyāṇa Kalpataru, Prārthanā, Song 3*)

What humble prayer should a pure devotee offer to the Goswamis, headed by Sri Rupa and Sanatan?

When will Sri Rupa Goswami bestow his mercy on me and deliver me by imparting the principles of true renunciation? When will Sri Sanatan Goswami, out of compassion, remove my attachment for sense gratification and offer me at the lotus feet of Sri Nityananda Prabhu? When will Sri Jiva Goswami extinguish the blazing fire of my arguments by pouring on them the water of scriptural conclusions? My heart is constantly burning. (*Kalyāṇa Kalpataru, Prārthanā, Song 4*)

How should one offer honest and humble prayers to the vaiṣṇavas?

As soon as I see a vaiṣṇava, I will hang a cloth on my neck. With folded hands and taking a straw in my mouth, I will stand before him without duplicity. I will relate to him my miserable condition and cry and beg for respite from the fire of material existence. (*Kalyāṇa Kalpataru, Prārthanā, song 1*)

— Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava, Translated by Bhumipati Das. Published by Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2003.



God's IDIOTS

A Poetic Translation of a Song by Namalwar

Mumbling and prattling the many names,
while onlookers say, "They're crazy!"
Entering and not entering cities,
standing still or swaying
before a laughing world,
they dance, they leap,
undone by feeling.

And the gods bow down
before them.

— Composed by A. K. Ramanujan. From *Hymns for the Drowning*. Penguin Books India. 2005.



"And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music." — Nietzsche

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 307

Śrī Pavitropaṇā Ekādaśī

17 August 2013

Circulation 6,540

Highlights

- **PREACH TO THE INTELLIGENT**
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
- **PURE AND IMPURE**
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur
- **THE SECRET OF MY APPEARANCE**
Various Commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā 4.9

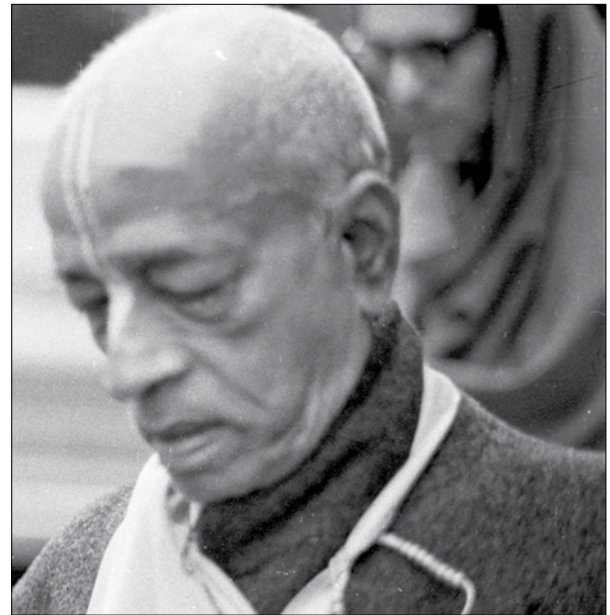


PREACH TO THE INTELLIGENT *His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

The report of book distribution going on in Chicago is very pleasing to me. As you know, our Chicago center is one of the most important. Please continue to use your intelligence to find out how to distribute my books more and more. I am especially pleased to learn that you are introducing my books as textbooks in the colleges. We especially have to try to attract the educated young men and women in your country so that in the future there will be many strong leaders to keep our Krishna consciousness movement strong. (Letter to Govinda Das, 7 April 1973.)

The report of the BBT traveling library party is something new for us and this is also only the beginning. Please give my heartfelt thanks to the boys, Sriman Maha Buddhi Das Brahmachari and Sriman Ghanashyam Das Brahmachari. These books are specifically meant for the intellectual class of people in your country and I have great hope in the results of this preaching at the universities. (Letter to Ramesvara Das, 9 May 1974.)

Your report of the book distribution there is very encouraging. Make program to distribute our books all over the world. Our books are being appreciated by learned circles, so we should take advantage. Whatever progress we have made, it is simply due to distributing these books. So go on and do not divert your mind for a moment from this. I have full confidence in you. (Letter to Ramesvara Das, 11 October 1974.)



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Try to increase the book distribution as much as possible. This is our business — to put our books in the hands of the intelligent men of America. If they read even one page, the influence will be so great. (Letter to Jagadisa Das, 2 February 1975.)

It is a great service to sell our books to educational institutions. The more you do this, the more you become recognized by Krishna. Take standing orders as much as possible. If you can induce any of these educational institutions to invite me, I shall go there to speak amongst the educated persons. Please continue your good work with added enthusiasm. (Letter to Amogha Das, 17 April 1975.)

PURE AND IMPURE

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

I am very glad to know that you have understood that by chanting the holy names of Krishna with a prescribed number of rounds one can achieve all auspiciousness. Do not stop the chanting of the holy name just because mundane thoughts keep surfacing in your mind while chanting. By constant chanting of the holy names of the Lord, all such useless thoughts will gradually go away.

There is no need to be anxious. The result of chanting is not easily attainable in the beginning. By developing intense love for chanting the holy name of Krishna, all hankering for mundane thoughts will diminish. Where is the possibility of mundane thoughts if strong eagerness is developed for chanting Krishna's name?

Manufactured sugar and adulterated ghee are impure, whereas homemade pure sugar and unadulterated ghee are pure. Both pure and impure objects are products of matter. Unless offered with heartfelt love and devotion, the Supreme Lord accepts neither pure nor impure objects. It is the duty of everyone to insure that they do not commit any *sevāparādha* while engaging in the Lord's service. When one simply serves the holy name with body, mind, and speech, the Supreme Lord reveals his most auspicious form. ॐ

— *Patrāmṛta, Nectar from the Letters*, translated by Bhumipati Dasa, published by Isvara Dasa, Touchstone Media, Kolkata, 2012.

THE SECRET OF MY APPEARANCE

Various Commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā 4.9

*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

One who knows the transcendental nature of my appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains my eternal abode, O Arjuna.

Srila Sridhar Swami — In this verse, the Lord explains the result one achieves through understanding his birth and activities as they are described in *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.5–8. The Lord says, “My birth (*janma*) is by my own volition.”

The term *karma* refers to his activities of protecting religious principles. The term *divyam* means transcendental. The term *tattvataḥ* means “learning for the ultimate goal”. One who understands in this

way gives up his mundane bodily ego and does not attain rebirth. Instead, he attains the Lord.

Srila Madhvacharya — [The previous chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* already describes various ways of attaining liberation.] The additional statement here about liberation indicates a person who comprehensively knows the birth and activities of the Lord. It is not that a mere rudimentary understanding will do. As it is said in the *Mahā-kaurma*:

*vedādy uktam tu sarvaṁ yo jñātvopāste sadā hi mām
tasyaiva darśana pathaṁ yāmi nānyasya kasyacit*

I appear on the path of the eyes of only those who understand the entirety of the Vedic literature and worship me continually, and not to anyone else.

A person who has such knowledge is described by the term *naiti* — he does not attain rebirth. The statements of the *Mahā-kaurma* quoted earlier have no other meaning, since the Lord specifically says that he does not appear “to anyone else”.

By using the adjective *tattvataḥ*, the comprehensive aspect of knowledge is stressed. Even if a part of truth is explained, it should be done after understanding the whole. In this there is no contradiction, for the *Skanda Purāṇa* says:

*ekaṁ ca tattvato jñātuṁ vinā sarvajñatām naraḥ
na samartho mahendro 'pi tasmāt sarvatra jijñaset*

One who simply understands a partial truth without the entire scope of detail cannot be suitable for explaining it, even if such a person is a great leader. Therefore, inquire from all directions.

Sripad Ramanujacharya — [The Lord says,] “Evam — In this way, one who knows that my birth is free from the karma-generating inferior material nature and is endowed with qualities such as almightiness, omniscience, true resolve, etc., that my purpose is to provide deliverance to the saintly souls and evoke exclusive surrender — in other words, one who knows my transcendental (*divyam*) non-ordinary birth and activities in truth (*tattvataḥ*), such a person after quitting the present body doesn't attain a rebirth. Rather, he attains me.

“One who knows, as it is, the science of my transcendental birth and activities, whose entire stock of sins preventing surrender unto me have been destroyed — such a person in this life takes shelter of me as described previously, becomes solely concentrated in meditation on me, and thus attains me.”



Gita Press painting. Unknown artist

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur — [The Lord says,] “According to the described symptoms, simply by understanding in truth my birth and subsequent activities after birth, one becomes successful.”

The word *divyam* means non-material, as stated in the commentaries of Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhusudan Saraswati. The same word, *divyam*, is interpreted as “transcendental” by Srila Sridhar Swami. Since the word *loka* means the material world created by the material energy, the word *alaukika* [used by Srila Sridhar Swami] also means non-material. Therefore, this word (*divyam*) proves that the birth and pastimes of the Lord are eternal due to being transcendental to the modes of nature. This is explained by Srila Jiva Goswami in the *Bhagavat-sandarbha* in the explanation of the *na vidyate yasya ca janma karma vā* verse of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* (8.3.8).

Or else, the word *divyam* can mean “unapproachable by logic” by the force of the statements of the *śrutis*, such as the *Puruṣa-bodhini-śruti*, which says:

eko devo nitya-līlānuraṅkto bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdayāntarātmā

The one [inconceivable] Lord, who is attached to eternal pastimes, expands inconceivably amongst the devotees and is simultaneously present as the supersoul within them.

The eternality of the birth (*janma*) and activities (*karma*) of the Lord is well described in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* [of Sri Sanatan Goswami]. One who understands these in truth (*tattvataḥ*) i.e. one who understands theistically the statements “*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā*” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.6] and the current statement “*janma karma ca me divyam*” and does not depend on any argument for confirming the eternality of the birth and pastimes [of the Lord], does not attain rebirth.

Or else, one [such as the *brahmavādī*] who understands in truth (*tattvataḥ*) the statement to be made later “*om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ*” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 17.23] does not attain rebirth. Here the word *tat* indicates the impersonal *brahman*. One who understands the reality of this *brahman* by understanding its fundamental nature (*svarūpatva*) does not attain rebirth.

Krishna says, “Such a person, on quitting his present body, does not attain another one. Rather, he attains me.”

Here the word *evam* (in this way) is seen as superior to the words *tyaktvā deham* (on quitting the body). This implies that even before quitting the body, one who understands me in this way (*evam*) attains me (*mām eti*). “One who knows, as it is, the science of my transcendental birth and activities, whose entire

stock of sins preventing surrender unto me have been destroyed — such a person in this life takes shelter of me as described previously, becomes solely concentrated in meditation on me, and thus attains me.”

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan — The Lord describes in this verse how liberation, which is difficult to attain even after many thousands of difficult practices, is easily attained by those who single-mindedly follow his path by hearing about his birth and activities, for which he says “I have appeared for this purpose.” He also says, “One who understands in truth the birth and activities of my various forms consisting of true resolve and almightiness, viz. Narsimha, Raghunath, etc., that are like the different reflections from a *vaidurya-maṇi*, and one who understands the pastimes in these forms with the various devotees to be non-material (*divyam*) and eternal, does not attain rebirth.”

This includes all eternal pastimes in the past and in the future. The *śruti* says [about divinity and eternality of pastimes]:

eko devo nitya-līlānurakto bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdayāntarātmā

The one [inconceivable] Lord, who is attached to eternal pastimes, expands inconceivably amongst the devotees and is simultaneously present as the supersoul within them.

Since this is the verdict of the *śruti*, such a person doesn't depend on any other logic. Krishna says, “O Arjuna! Such a person on quitting his body doesn't attain another material body.” He attains the state of his meditation, or, in other words, he becomes liberated. Besides understanding the truth, there is no other way of liberation, as described in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [3.8]:

tam eva viditvātīmrtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya

By knowing him only one surpasses death and attains liberation. There is no other way.

All other terms in this verse would be interpreted in the same way for the impersonal explanation. The arguments for the eternality of the Lord's birth and pastimes should be seen elsewhere where they are elaborately described.

Sri Keshav Kashmiri — In this way, the result of knowing [the Lord's] birth and activities is described [in this verse]. [The Lord says] — “I am the omniscient, all powerful, Lord of all and source of everything. My birth is untouched by the material nature consisting of three modes. It is eternally perfect, and through my eternal omniscient blissful form I demonstrate my supreme free will in my appearance. My activities are delivering the devotees and destroying the non-devotees.”

The term *divyam* means non-material. The term *tattvataḥ* means “by spiritual intelligence”. The Lord continues, “O Arjuna! One who understands me in the abovementioned way, such a person on quitting the gross body and subtle body does not attain rebirth. Rather he attains me — the destination of the liberated souls, the personification of truth, knowledge and bliss, the Supreme Brahman, Vasudev. This means that he attains to my consciousness (Krishna Consciousness).”

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SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 308

Śrī Annadā Ekādaśī

01 September 2013

Circulation 6,570

Highlights

- **THE ALERTNESS OF RADHARANI**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **FORM OF CONDENSED LOVE**

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

- **RADHA AND KRISHNA'S FIRST MEETING**

Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur

- **ANCIENT VERSES DEPICTING SRI RADHA**

- **AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN**

Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati Thakur



Special Issue for Radhastami

THE ALERTNESS OF RADHARANI

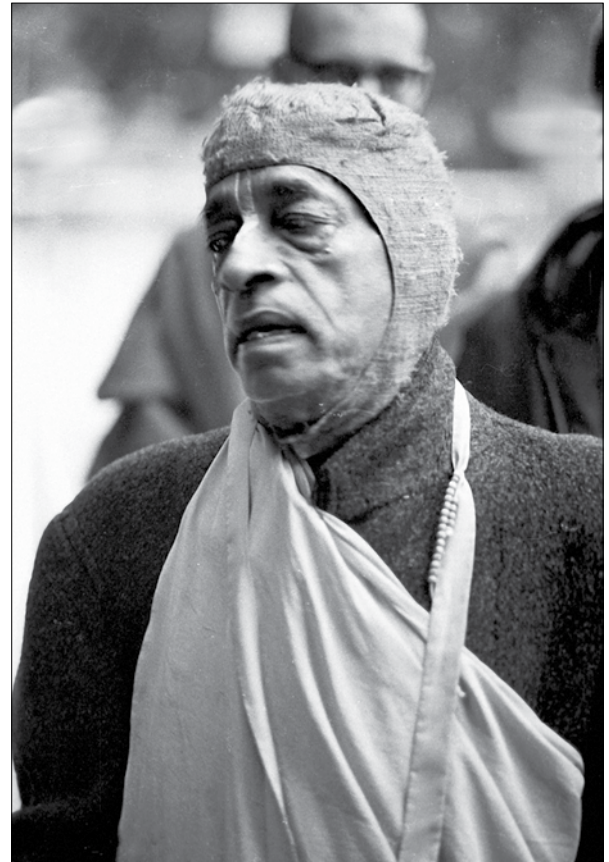
His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

When Srimati Radharani first saw Krishna, she suddenly became conscious of all transcendental happiness, and the functions of her different limbs were stunned. When Lalita, her constant companion, whispered into her ear the holy name of Krishna, Radharani immediately opened her eyes wide. This is an instance of alertness caused by hearing the sound of Krishna's name.

One day, in a joking mood, Krishna informed Radharani, "My dear Radharani, I am going to give up your company." Upon saying this, he immediately disappeared, and because of this Radharani became so afflicted that the hue of her body changed, and she immediately fell down upon the ground of Vrindavan. She had practically stopped breathing, but when she smelled the flavor of the flowers on the ground, she awoke in ecstasy and got up. This is an instance of transcendental alertness caused by smelling.

When Krishna was touching the body of one *gopī*, the *gopī* addressed her companion thus: "My dear friend, whose hand is this touching my body? I had become very afraid after seeing the dark forest on the bank of the Yamuna, but suddenly the touch of this hand has saved me from hysterical fits." This is an instance of alertness caused by touching.



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

One of the *gopīs* informed Krishna, "My dear Krishna, when you disappeared from the arena of the *rāsa*



Srimati Radharani

dance, our most dear friend, Radharani, immediately fell on the ground and lost consciousness. But after this, when I offered her some of your chewed betel nut remnants, she immediately returned to consciousness with jubilant symptoms in her body.” This is an instance of alertness caused by tasting.

One night Srimati Radharani was talking in a dream. “My dear Krishna,” she said, “please do not play any more jokes on me! Please stop! And please don’t touch my garments either. Otherwise I shall inform the elderly persons, and I shall disclose all of your naughty behavior.” While she was talking like this in a dream, she suddenly awoke and saw some of her superiors standing before her. Thus Radharani became ashamed and bowed her head. This is an instance of alertness after awakening from sleep.

There is another instance of this. A messenger from Krishna came to Srimati Radharani while she was sleeping, and Radharani immediately awakened. Similarly, when Krishna began to blow on his flute in the night, all of the *gopīs*, the beautiful daughters of the cowherd men, immediately got up from their sleep. There is a very beautiful comparison made in this connection: “The lotus flower is sometimes surrounded by white swans, and sometimes it is surrounded by black wasps who

are collecting its honey. When there is a thundering in the sky, the swans go away, but the black wasps stay to enjoy the lotus flowers.” The *gopīs*’ sleeping condition is compared to the white swans, and the sound of Krishna’s flute is compared to a black wasp. When Krishna’s flute sounded, the white swans, which represent the sleeping condition of the *gopīs*, were immediately vanquished, and the black wasp sound of the flute began to enjoy the lotus flower of the *gopīs*’ beauty. ॐ

— From *Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 30. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Bombay. 1989.

FORM OF CONDENSED LOVE

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The pleasure-giving potency is known as *hlādinī-śakti*. The condensed form of *hlādinī-śakti* is *prema*. When *hlādinī-śakti* becomes condensed and assumes a form, that form is *prema*. And the most condensed form of that *prema* is *mahābhāva*. That is Radharani, *mahābhāva-mayī kṛṣṇa-premara ghanibhūta avasthā* — If *kṛṣṇa-prema* assumes a most condensed form, that is Radharani. That *hlādinī-śakti* is Radharani, and it gives all pleasure to both Krishna and the devotees. Therefore the devotees are engaged in loving service to Krishna. Out of that service they get pleasure, *sevānanda*.



Reproduction by Navneet Parikh



Unknown artist

Hlādinī-śakti gives that pleasure. Otherwise, if that pleasure were not there, no one would have engaged in loving service to Krishna. *Hlādinī-śakti* gives pleasure both to Krishna and to the devotees. Radharani is the embodiment of that *hlādinī-śakti*. Radharani only thinks of the pleasure and happiness of Krishna. She never thinks of herself. Radha is *govindānandīnī*, she who gives pleasure to Govinda. *rādhā vinā tīrṇhoṇ kārō naya* — “Krishna only belongs to Radharani.” (Srīla Bhaktisiddhanta’s *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* introduction to *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, verse 4) He doesn’t belong to anyone else. He is completely captured by Radharani. That is Krishna. Therefore, Krishna manifests himself in his own complete *svarūpa* before Radharani. ❧

— *Mathura Meets Vrindavan*, p. 95. Lecture, Bhubaneswar, 10 December 1992.

RADHA AND KRISHNA’S FIRST MEETING

*Adapted from Srīla Narahari Chakravarti Thakur’s
Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara chapter 13*

*ekadina kṛṣṇa baṣi’ bhāve mane mane
kirūpe yāiba vṛṣabhānura bhavane*

One day, Krishna began thinking of a plan by which he could enter into the palace of Radharani’s father, Maharaja Vrishabhanu. (347)

Very soon thereafter, on the occasion of Sri Radha’s birthday celebration, Vrishabhanu sent his son Sridama to invite Nanda Maharaja and his family and friends to his palace. Hearing of the invitation, Krishna became full of bliss. Nanda and his party arrived and entered Vrishabhanu’s palace.

*rādhā kṛṣṇa doṇhe doṇhā dekhi’ alakhita
phirāite nāre netra haiyā vimohita*

When Radha and Krishna met, they stood staring at one another, enchanted by each other’s beauty. (351)

Later, for the occasion of Krishna’s appearance day, Mother Yasoda told Nanda that he should invite all his friends for a celebration. Nanda sent the son of his elder brother Upananda to the palace of Vrishabhanu and requested them to come to his house. Vrishabhanu and others came to Nanda’s home carrying various gifts. Vrishabhanu’s queen, Kirtida, and their daughter Radhika came along. Yasoda cordially received them, offering them celestial seats. News of the festival spread throughout Vraja and all the *gopī*’s rushed to the house of Nanda, joyfully singing songs for Krishna’s well being. The *gopas* decorated themselves with ornaments and went to Nanda’s home carrying many buckets of milk,

curds and ghee. The Lord's birthday celebration was thus celebrated with great ecstasy.

On that occasion, Krishna observed Sri Radha from a secluded place, but the two of them were unable to come closer to each other due to the presence of so many respected elders. Thus Sri Radha began to consider some pretext by which she could escape to meet Kanu. Somehow, her confidante Lalita managed to take Radha to a lonely place where she met her beloved Krishna. ❧

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ANCIENT VERSES DEPICTING SRI RADHA

The following two verses depicting Srimati Radharani are found in the writings of ancient poets, thus demonstrating that the pastimes of their Lordships were being sung in their full glory even as much as 2,500 years ago.

*teṣāṁ gopa-vadhū vilāsa suhr̥dāṁ rādhā-rahāḥ sākṣiṇāṁ
kṣemaṁ bhadrā kalinda-rāja-tanayā-tīre latā-veśmanām
vicchinne smara-talpa-kalpāna-vidhic-chedopa yoge dhunā
te jāne jatharī bhavanti vigalan-ñīla tviṣaḥ pallavāḥ*

May all good fortune be on those gracious forest vines - [for they are] the friends of the *gopīs* enjoyment and the witness of Sri Radha's secret talks.

[Alas!] Now [that Krishna is no longer in Vrindavan], since there is no purpose to pluck them in order to make soft beds, these tender forest vines seem to be devoid of their bluish hue and seem to dry away and perish!

— *Dhvanīlōka* of Anandavardhan, Second *udḍyōta*, composed around 9th Century AD.

*mukhamārutena tvaṁ kṛṣṇa gorājo rādhikāyā 'panayan
etāsāṁ ballavīnām anyāsām api gauravaṁ harasi*

O Krishna! By blowing with your mouth you disperse the cow-dust from Sri Radhika's face. Thereby you plunder the pride of these *gopīs* and all others. ❧

— Translated by Hariparshad Das from the *Gāthā Saptasatī* of Hala, composed around 200 BC.

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AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN

**Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati Thakur's
Śrī Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudha-nidhi, text 254**

*sadā gāyaṁ gāyaṁ madhuratara-rādhā-priya-yaśaḥ
sadā sāndrānandā nava-rasada-rādhā-rati-kathāḥ
sadā sthāyaṁ sthāyaṁ nava-nibhṛta-rādhā-rati-vane
sadā dhyāyaṁ dhyāyaṁ vivaśa-hṛdi rādhā-pada-sudhāḥ*

Again and again I sing the sweet glories of Sri Radha. Again and again I describe the blissful nectar glories of Sri Radha. Again and again I stay in the secluded forest where Sri Radha enjoys pastimes. With a heart overcome with love, again and again I meditate on the nectar flowing from Sri Radha's feet. ❧

— English translation by Sri Kusakratha Das. The Kṛṣṇa Library. Los Angeles.



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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 309

Śrī Pārśvā Ekādaśī

16 September 2013

Circulation 6,590

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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE — PART 1

from Srila Jiva Goswami's *Gopāla-campū*



STANDARDS FOR OFFERING BHOGA

His Divine Grace A. C.

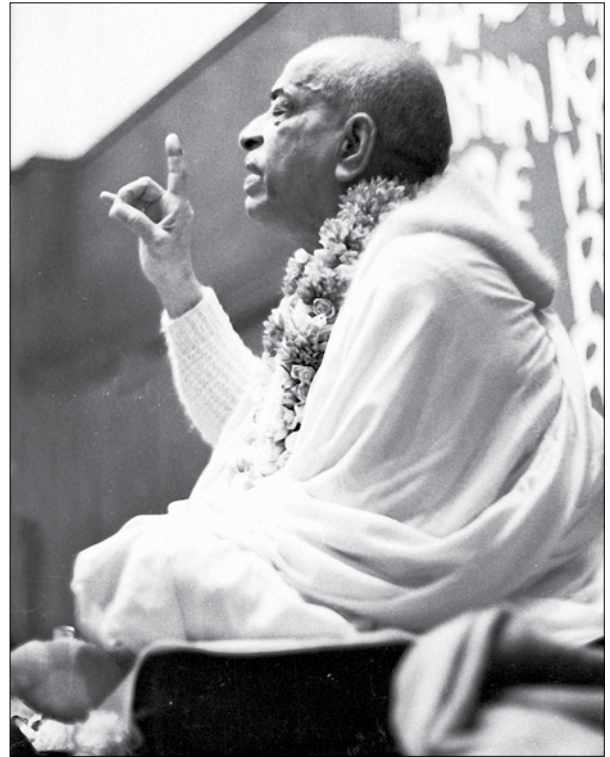
VBhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Brown rice is generally doubly boiled; therefore it cannot be used for Krishna prasādam. Unpolished rice which looks like brown rice can be used. Generally in America the brown rice is doubly boiled, therefore it is unfit. We do not mind polished or unpolished, but doubly boiled mustn't be used. Doubly boiled rice is considered impure. Sun baked rice is all right. (Letter to Mahapurush, 17 October 1967.)

Brijbasi & Co. are not ordinary businessmen; they are devotees. So their pictures aren't poisonous. Even it is poison, because we are paying for their goods, therefore if any poison is there, it becomes ineffective. Just like we are buying so many things at the market which are not fit for offering to Krishna, but because we are purchasing them, we can offer. (Letter to Jadurani, 15 February 1968.)

So far as offering Krishna apple cider, this can be done only if is prepared by devotees. These food manufacturers do not take proper precautions in cleanliness nor do they have devotion to Krishna in their labors, so it is not a very acceptable offering. If you can make this preparation yourself then it will be all right. (Letter to Rukmini, 19 December 1968.)

Regarding purchasing things in the market, these items are considered as purified when we pay the price for them. That is the general instruction. But when we know something is adulterated, we should avoid it. But unknowingly if something adulterated



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

is purchased, that is not our fault. Things which are suspicious, however, should be avoided. (Letter to Krishna Das, 25 December 1969.)

Regarding the preparation of rice by steaming and then drying, we can offer such rice even if it is twice-cooked. Gaudiya Math offers; even during the presence of Prabhupada [Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati] it was done, so there is nothing wrong. It is called *cīrā*. I never took *cīrā* except in Gaudiya Math. (Letter to Jayapataka Swami, 22 October 1972.)

LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE

*Adapted from Srila Jiva Goswami's
Gopāla-campū Pūrva, chapter 17*

One evening, in a village assembly attended by the *gopīs* and Srimati Radharani, the poet Madhukantha started speaking. As the various pastimes of Krishna he spoke unfolded, especially those that occurred after the killing of Dhenuka, the desire of the *gopīs* swelled with each passing day, exactly like the growing soft petals of a lotus. These desires started manifesting in the *gopīs* daily activities, and this in turn increased the desires of the unfathomable Krishna. And paramount among them were the intensifying desires of Sri Radhika.

Astonishingly, even though Radha and Krishna were separated by a distance, both demonstrated the same symptoms in their behavior due to undergoing the same emotions. The desire to meet on a pretext; to see each other from a distance; to actually meet; exasperation against detractors; a constant feeling of angst — these emotions arose simultaneously in Radha and Krishna. Indeed, their emotions were like two mirrors facing each other. When either of them would almost faint due to these emotions, the swoon would be prevented by an auspicious anticipation of their actual meeting. In this way, the *gopīs*, who had the rarest type of love for Krishna, somehow passed the not-so-favorable autumn season, just to find that the month of *mārgaśīrṣa* (November-December) had paved their way to the homes of their so-called husbands [in other words, they had all reached marriageable age].

The parents of those *gopīs* were themselves extremely hesitant to give away their daughters to anyone besides Krishna, considering all such marriage proposals to be like bad dreams, and this resulted in them not being able to provide proper hospitality to the would-be grooms' families. Moreover, they saw the crestfallen condition of the girls, and thus they too were in a state of anxiety. Fear of social reproach [which would result should they not get their daughters married] was also gripping them. At that time, an anxious Purnamasi instructed each of the parents, "You continue to maintain your disinterested attitude. I myself will arrange for the hospitality of the would-be in-laws and everything else for the marriage. I'll also ensure that your daughter is engaged in the service of her husband at her in-laws' place."

Worshiped by even the gods, Purnamasi herself appeased the angry in-laws of the *gopīs*, who were displeased by the indifference of the *gopīs* parents. Thus, as intended, she made the in-laws favorable.

Alas! The poor *gopīs* could never tolerate going to the homes of those who proudly considered themselves to be their husbands. Neither could they tolerate the imposed bond of marriage and the harsh words given to them by their in-laws.

Then, through a magic spell, Purnamasi made it possible that their desired goal — Krishna — would be attained and the undesirable association of the so-called husbands would be avoided. By her *māyā*, Purnamasi made the original *gopīs* disappear during intimate moments with their so-called husbands and made artificial replicas of those *gopīs* appear in the same place. Later, when the intimacy between the so-called *gopīs* and so-called husbands ended, she restored the original *gopīs* back to their places. However, this did not end the fear of the *gopīs*.

The *gopīs* considered their bodies to be prison-houses in absence of an opportunity to obtain Krishna. How troublesome it was to stay at their parents homes before marriage! And fie upon their current condition, when they were at their in-law's places. Indeed, their in-law's homes were like a burning fire for their souls. In the absence of Krishna, even favorable objects appeared unfavorable. What then to speak of unfavorable objects? The unfavorable objects were just like a bed of dry grass that had caught fire.

When Purnamasi nicely established the *gopīs* at their so called in-laws homes, she then planned to leave. In order to console the anxious *gopīs*, she told them, "Whenever you see yourselves in a dangerous situation, run away from there. My occult powers will ensure that the situation remains under control. You will spontaneously come to know where you have to run to."

The *gopīs* who had shifted from their parents homes to their in-laws were just like prisoners who were earlier staying in a royal prison but had to suddenly shift to an enemy prison due to being conquered by an enemy king. The restrictions imposed on them increased their desires and caused them great anxiety. This anxiety merged with their breathing process.

Although the *gopīs*' desire to attain Sri Hari had risen to a great extent within their hearts, they suppressed these desires exactly as a dung-patty suppresses fire.



Painting by D. Banerji

In other words, as a dung-patty initially covers up the fire in which it is placed but ultimately becomes its fuel, the *gopīs* suppression of desires will ultimately become a catalyst for arranging a meeting with Krishna again.

This suppression of desires is demonstrated by the example of Sri Radhika's following statement, "He whose effulgence is as pleasing and cooling as the moonshine, whose qualities make everyone stunned with ecstasy, and whose heart is extremely soft, is the ultimate destination of us *gopīs*, who are just like *cakorī* birds waiting for the moon to rise. Alas! *Dharma*, the code of religion, stops my way and forces me on the path of *adharma*, irreligion."

Krishna thought, "Alas! The single-pointedly devoted Sri Radhika, who is just like my life, is now under the control of someone else. Remembering this, I am reeling and forgetting myself." Remembering Sri Radhika in this way, for many days he sadly wiped his eyes with his yellow turmeric-colored cloth.

Even though he was extremely eager to meet Sri Radhika, how could Krishna disclose this irreligious fact to his friends? Therefore, clever-minded Krishna engaged his eyes in doing the messenger work for him. In other words, whenever he saw the *gopīs*, his eyes would do the talking for him.

The *gopīs* later acknowledged the role of his eyes, as follows:

*śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat-
sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dṛśā
surata-nātha te 'śulka-dāsikā
vara-da nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ*

O Lord of love, in beauty your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of benedictions, you are killing the maidservants who have given themselves to you freely, without any price. Isn't this murder? (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.31.2.)

Alas! When the side-long glances of Lord Krishna fall on any devotee besides the *gopīs*, the authors of the *dharma-śāstras* (codes of religious conduct) consider it the fruit of all the *śāstras* (scriptures). And when these same side-long glances fall on the *gopīs*, they are considered to be like the sharp edge of a weapon (*śāstra*).

In the hearts of Krishna and the *gopīs*, fires burnt constantly during the afternoons and nights, but the fire would flare up in the mornings and evenings due to seeing each other. Indeed, in this way it was just like the fire in the homes of the *agnihotra*-performing *brāhmaṇas*.

When Krishna would leave for the forests in the early morning and come back in the late evening, the *gopīs* would gather along with all the others for seeing him. Among the *gopīs*, Sri Radhika appeared as special as the *Anurādhā* constellation on a *pūrṇimā* day.

When Krishna would leave for the forests in the morning he would hold the hand of the *gopa* next to him while looking in an indirect way toward the *gopīs*. While embracing and playing with his friends, Krishna would give signals to the *gopīs* by the sound of his flute.

The *gopīs* will express this in the future as follows:

*prahasitaṁ priya-prema-vikṣaṇaṁ
viharaṇaṁ ca te dhyāna-maṅgalaṁ
rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdi sprśaḥ
kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi*

Your smiles, your sweet, loving glances, the intimate pastimes and confidential talks we enjoyed with you — all these are auspicious to meditate upon, and they touch our hearts. But at the same time, O deceiver, they very much agitate our minds. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.31.10)

When Krishna would return from the forest in the evening, the *gopīs* would see his lotus face covered with cow-dust and surrounded by curly locks of bluish-black hair. It seemed that cupid, in the form of those curly hair-locks, had created a trap for the bee-like eyes of the *gopīs*.

The *gopīs* will express the same as follows:

*dina-parikṣaye nīla-kuntalair
vanaruhāṇanaṁ bibhṛad āvṛtam
ghana-rajasaṅgāṁ darśayan muhur
manasi naḥ smaraṁ vīra yacchasi*

At the end of the day you repeatedly show us your lotus face, covered with dark blue locks of hair and thickly powdered with dust. Thus, O hero, you arouse lusty desires in our minds. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.31.12)



Unknown artist

In this way, the competitive desires increased on a day-to-day basis, and the anxiety of the *gopīs* appeared to have put the newly arrived months of *caitra-vaiśākha* (March-April-May) in anxiety.

Sri Shukadev narrates this anxiety of the *gopīs* as follows:

*gopīnāṁ paramānanda āsīd govinda-darśane
kṣaṇaṁ yuga-śatam iva yāsāṁ yena vinābhavat*

The young *gopīs* took the greatest pleasure in seeing Govinda come home, since for them even a moment without his association seemed like a hundred ages. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.19.16)

What this means is that the pleasure derived in seeing Govinda cannot be described in words. It only occurs when the correct circumstances are present. A few moments of separation from Krishna would appear to them as many *yugas*. And on meeting Krishna, thousands of *yugas* appeared like a few moments. When even a few moments of separation would appear as long as *yugas*, we can't imagine how the *gopīs* spent their nights in separation from Krishna. Somehow the *gopīs* spent their time gazing at Krishna in the mornings and evenings, and thus the summer season passed, paving way for the rains. 🌧

(To be continued)

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from the Sanskrit at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

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- **LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE — PART 2**
from Srila Jiva Goswami's Gopāla-campū



SATISFYING THE LORD IN THIS AGE

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Sri Madhvacharya has brought our attention to this quotation from the *Nārāyaṇa-saṁhitā*:

*dvāparīyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais tu kevalaiḥ
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ*

“In the *Dvāpara-yuga* one could satisfy Krishna or Vishnu only by worshiping opulently according to the *pañcarātrikī* system, but in the Age of Kali one can satisfy and worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari simply by chanting his holy names.” — Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* antya 7.12.

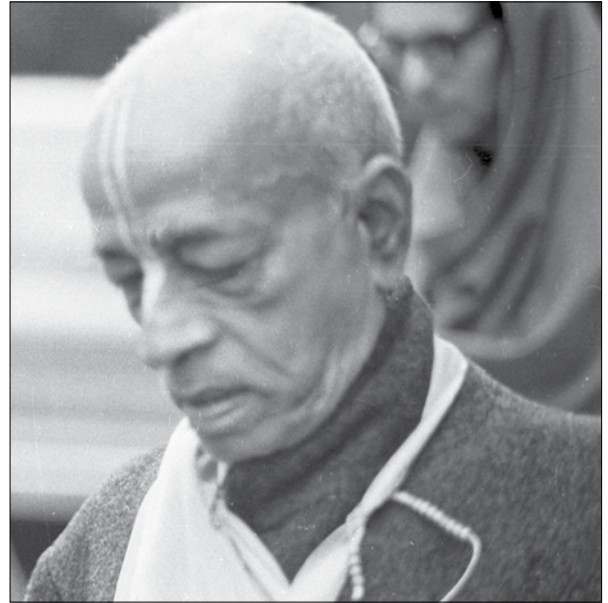
LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE

*Adapted from Srila Jiva Goswami's
Gopāla-campū, pūrva, chapter 17*

In the rainy season, bound in their homes, the *gopīs* sometimes thought, “We remember Krishna’s *bhojana-līlā*, pastimes of eating with his friends, such as his eating of dates and other fruits under a tree that provides shelter from the rain, and his eating of curd rice, etc., on the large rocks near the river bank while calling out to the cows from a distance. These thoughts scrape our hearts with sharp nails.”

*ghanāgama-ghanāgame viramitājitonmīlane
samasta-jana-śarmadāḥ sapadi khañjarīṭekṣaṇāḥ
amūḥ śuci-ruci-śrīyā sva-hṛdi kṛṣṇa-bhāvaṁ gatā
hari-vraja-nava-priyās tamasi linatām āgatāḥ*

When the rains were excessive, the *gopīs* could not see Lord Ajita at all. They, who had eyes like the wag-tail



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

bird and who were dear to all, absorbed themselves in the glory of the amorous remembrance of Lord Krishna. In this way, the darkness (Krishna) of their hearts, which was due to the absence of Krishna, caused them to completely absorb themselves in thoughts of Krishna. (Text 25)

And when the friends of these *gopīs* tried to lighten their hearts by discussing things other than Krishna, at that time the rainy season itself took on the role of the enemy, for it was equipped with dark lightning-filled clouds that reminded the *gopīs* of Krishna.

In the previous months the *gopīs* had been thinking, “It is due to the hot summers that the heat of separation within our minds has been agitated.

Unknown artist



Radha and Krishna in the rain

This heat will be tamed by the rains.” But, alas, the opposite happened! The rains added fire to the heat!

The croaking frogs, insects, and similar creatures, by their shrill voices, seemed to be criticizing the rainy season, “Just see! In the sky of the *gopīs* hearts, the dark clouds of Krishna have appeared, and these clouds are now showering rain in the form of the *gopīs* tears.”

The tails of Vraja’s peacocks appeared to be like Cupid’s quiver of arrows, while the individual peacock feathers looked like Cupid’s half-moon arrows.

Whatever qualities the rainy season employed to bring relief to the *gopīs*, the *gopīs* perceived as inflammatory. They thought, “Alas! Our very friend the rainy season has become our enemy. Indeed, the ways of providence are strange.”

Speaking fearfully, the *gopīs* said, “All these *nīra-da* (water-giving clouds) are *nī-rada* (without teeth), yet they seem to have developed teeth in the form of lightning bolts, and these teeth are grinding the hearts of we who are situated on earth. Thus, they roar with pride.”

How interesting are the ways of love! Even though the *gopīs* generally perceived the clouds as being unfavorable to them, Srimati Radharani still found some favorable nature. Looking at them, she said, “O lightning! What and how many austerities have you performed that you always seem to be dancing around the chest of the dark (Krishna-like) clouds!”

Having said this out of fleeting madness, Sri Radhika then realized that her friends were present, so she immediately re-interpreted the same sentence as, “O friends! Just see how the lightning dances around the dark clouds.”

The friends replied, “Are you remembering amorous pastimes with Krishna?”

Radhika replied, “No! I’m just glorifying the qualities of the season.”

Another time, Sri Radhika said, “Just see! The rainy season brings a feast of feelings of *harita* (Lord Hari) for the eyes.”

Her friend asked, “You are desiring Krishna again, aren’t you?”

Radhika replied, “No, my jealous friend! I was describing the feast of feelings that the *harita* (greenery) experience at the onset of the rainy season.”

Meanwhile, Krishna is also remembering Srimati Radharani at this time. In this remembrance, Krishna does not notice the excessively beautiful groups of peacocks that dance in the rainy season with beautiful sounds, and he even forgets the peacock feather on his crown.

After the rainy season showed such unfavorable behavior to the *gopīs*, the autumn season arrived. The *gopīs* expected that the clarity of the skies during the autumn would bring clarity to their hearts. But alas! The autumn season ended up doubling the muddiness [within their hearts]. Sri Radhika, who was agitated during the rains by seeing the lightning-filled clouds, now was agitated by not seeing them.

Sri Radhika and Sri Krishna wrote on new leaves about the depths of their feelings of separation, and the winds of the autumn season brought Sri Radhika’s leaf to Krishna and Sri Krishna’s leaf to Radha.

Sri Radhika had written:

*taḍitaḥ puṇya-śālinyaḥ sadā yā ghana-jīvanāḥ
tena sārddham adṛśyanta, nādṛśyanta ca taṁ vinā*

“The lightning bolts, who have the clouds as their very life, are very pious, for they are never seen without their dark clouds [but I am unfortunate because I am always seen without the dark cloud Krishna].” (33)



Radharani writes a letter to Krishna

Unknown artist

Sri Krishna had written:

*āvṛtim ajahād indur vilasati haṁsaś ca nīla-kañjam ca
vṛndāvanam anu hā dhig daivaṁ tat tan na dṛśyate tasyāḥ*

“The moon has given up its cloudy shelter and the swan and the blue lotus are beautifully decorating the lake, but thinking of Vrindavan my mind doesn’t take pleasure in these things. Fie on providence!” (34)

But it was by providence that these leaves reached Radha and Krishna. Crying upon reading Krishna’s verse, Radharani embraced the leaf, made a pendant out of it, and wore it around her neck.

Radharani’s friends also expressed distaste in the autumn, “Alas! The same autumn which has provided clarity and beauty to the lake, the flowers, the lotus, and the moon has also led to a total lack of clarity of the beauty of each *gopī*’s mind [which is compared to a lake], eyes [which are compared to flowers], face [which is compared to a lotus] and teeth [which are compared to the moon]. How can this be tolerable?”

This has also been described by Sri Shukadev Goswami:

*āśliṣya sama-śiṭoṣṇaṁ prasūna-vana-mārutam
janās tāpaṁ jahur gopyo na kṛṣṇa-hṛta-cetasaḥ*

Except for the *gopīs*, whose hearts had been stolen by Krishna, the people could forget their suffering by embracing the wind coming from the flower-filled forest. This wind was neither hot nor cold. (*Bhāg.* 10.20.45)

Krishna’s condition, too, was strange. During times of union, his beauty, form, grace and bluish hue appeared to be the greatest nectar. But in times of separation these same qualities appeared like great [bluish] venom.

While everyone else recognized the fragrance from Krishna’s body to be their very life, the *gopīs*, who had become skinny due to separation, considered these fragrant airs to be like sharp arrows. Although all of the *gopīs* had attained the pinnacle of eagerness, they did not express their feelings to one another. Their mood was, “Even if it is irreligious, I will serve Krishna.” And Krishna’s mood was similar.

Both of them were unhappy, feeling separation, but the *gopīs* were more unhappy due to their simplicity. Seeing no other way to rid them of their suffering, Krishna tried to use his stern glances as a chastising rod to forcibly calm them down. When that also did not succeed, he started playing his flute in a unique way to tame them.

This is also described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* at an appropriate place:

veṇu-vādyā urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ

“In playing the flute, you gave us many lessons.” (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.35.14)



Krishna plays his flute

Sri Krishna, too, invested his mind in the *gopīs*, and from then on he always paired himself with Balaram and started playing on his sweet flute. In the midst of the forest (which had a different mood, *sakhya*, due to him being with his friends), incomprehensible Krishna displayed his expertise in playing the flute among his friends on a daily basis and started giving them all lessons in the flute.

And the desire of the *gopīs* to have the personal association of Krishna was satisfied through hearing these sounds of Krishna’s flute. Indeed, the very nature of Krishna consciousness is that its possessor can be effectively captured by Krishna even from a distance.

Among the *gopīs*, those who had particularly intense feelings of love for Krishna still remained distressed. However, they never considered their unhappiness to be a serious concern.”

Sri Radhika had her companions like Vishakha, Lalita, and the similar-sounding Anuradha. Chandravali had her companions such as Shaibya, Padma, etc. Considering Lalita, Vishakha and others to be very dear, Radharani revealed her heart to them out of friendly affection. Seeing that Krishna was almost hidden in the company of Balaram, they glorified Krishna by camouflaging his name under the name of Balaram through a song. This song did not refer to Krishna directly by his name, but it referred to Krishna in a covered way by referring to his brother as follows:

Early Bengal School, c. 1880



Sri Sri Krishna Balaram

(jaya) rāmo rāmānuja iti yugalam
kṛta-naṭa-veṣatayā paṭu rājati gāyati sakhi-gaṇa-yugalam
[dhruva]

Glories to the brothers Rama (Balaram) and Ramanuja
(Rama's younger brother)! Decorating themselves as



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Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

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Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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expert connoisseurs, together with friends they sing
a wonderful song. [Refrain]

sarasa-rasālaja-pallava-tallaja-pallavitāmala-śīrṣam
nava-yauvana-vana-bījāṅkuram iva dhārayad-atanu-cikīrṣam

Their foreheads are decorated with a spotless youthful
leaf from a nectar-laden mango tree. Indeed, they
seem to be carrying the forest seeds of youthful vitality
with them.

vāñchita-piñchāvali-parilāñchita-maṇi-nicayāñcita-keśam
dadhad iva hari-dhanur-anugata-tārā-vali-valitāmbuda-leśam

A most attractive peacock feather and strands of pearls
decorate their hair. The peacock feather appears to be
a rainbow around which the strands of pearls appear
like stars studded on the dark clouds of their hair.

valayita-nava-dalad-utpala-karṇika-karṇa-yugādbhuta-śobham
latikā kāsāv iti vismayakṛti madhukṛti vinihita-lobham

Their ears are like two beautiful whorls of freshly
blooming lotus flowers. Even the bumblebees get
confused as to which is the more beautiful ear. Thus,
the bumblebees are endowed with great greed.

hasta-kamalam abhi kamala-vighūrṇana-ramaṇa-kalā-ramaṇīyam
madhupa-gaṇaṇi prati madhu-kaṇa-varṣaṇam akṛta yataḥ kamaṇīyam

Both appear beautiful as they display their expertise in
swinging the lotus flowers in their hands. Bestowing
nectar-drops on the bumblebees, they fulfill the
bumblebee's desires.

mālāmālā-parimala-bali-bali-vapur ali-valita-sadeśam
ali-jhañkṛti-nuti-kolāhala-vaha-bahula-kutūhala-veśam

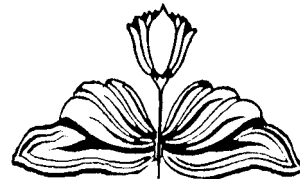
Their sturdy bodies are well decorated with a host of
flower garlands. With great reverence, the bumblebees
buzz around these garlands, offering various prayers.
Indeed, it appears as if a great commotion of such
prayers is going on around about them.

sitam asitaṁ vapur asitaṁ pītaṁ vasanaṁ yasya ca gītam
tad idaṁ yadi gokulam anu gokulam ayati tadāgham atītam

Their bodies are bright (Balaram) and dark (Krishna),
but their clothes are dark (blue) and bright (yellow)
respectively. Seeing these beautiful brothers enter
into Gokul, all our miseries vanish. ॐ

(to be continued)

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit at Gaudiya
Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 311

Śrī Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī

15 October 2013

Circulation 6,630

Highlights

- **CHEATING OTHERS FOR BHAKTI**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE — PART 3**

from Srila Jiva Goswami's Gopāla-campū

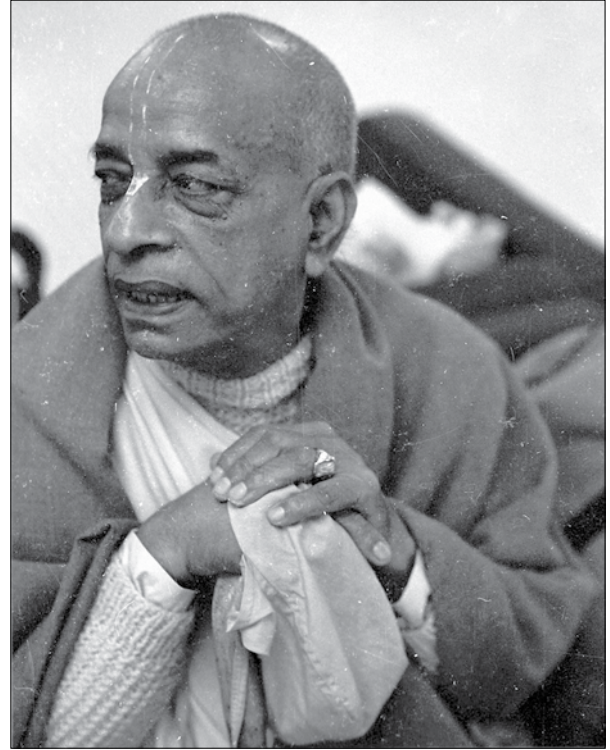


CHEATING OTHERS FOR BHAKTI

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

That great souls cheat others may be astonishing to know, but it is a fact that great souls cheat others for a great cause. It is said that Lord Krishna also advised Yudhishthira to tell a lie before Dronacharya, and it was also for a great cause. The Lord wanted it, and therefore it was a great cause. Satisfaction of the Lord is the criterion of one who is bona fide, and the highest perfection of life is to satisfy the Lord by one's occupational duty. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.13.37)

So far this making some false story for collecting money or selling book, of course we may do anything for Krishna, but that is supposed to be reserved for very advanced experts in Krishna consciousness — they know how to catch the big fish without themselves getting wet. So it is not very much advisable to make lies just to sell books. If we simply stick to describing how wonderful is Krishna, then whatever we may lie or exaggerate that will not be a lie. But other things, lies, they will not help us to train ourselves in truthfulness. Lie to some, not to others, that is not a good philosophy. Rather, the *brāhmaṇas* are always truthful, even to their enemies. There is sufficient merit in our books that if you simply describe them sincerely to anyone, they will buy. That art you must develop, not art of lying. Convince them to give by your preaching the Absolute Truth, not by tricking. That is the more mature stage of development of Krishna consciousness. (Letter of 25 December 1972)



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

So far the meaning of the word “cheating”, there are only three things to be known — that Krishna is the Supreme Enjoyer, the Supreme Proprietor of everything, and the Supreme Friend of everyone, and we say that honesty is acting upon the knowledge of these three facts. So if one is always acting under these three facts, knowing Krishna to be the supreme proprietor, enjoyer, and friend, then he is truly honest, and if one is not acting in this knowledge, then he is always cheating or being dishonest.

So if you apply this to your techniques for selling literature to persons in the *saṅkīrtana* party, then you will understand what the meaning of the word ‘cheating’ is. (Letter of 2 May 1972)

Regarding the illegal taking of the Japanese currency from the country, do not do these things. Also stop the pen stealing. This is not good and should be stopped. (Letter of 30 August 1974)

What is this stealing and violence? This is not good. Stealing is not our business. Our business is to become Krishna conscious. Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion. This is our program. (Letter of 9 November 1975) ❧

LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE

Adapted from Srila Jiva Goswami’s Gopāla-campū, pūrva, chapter 17

The last issue left off with the gopīs singing, “Seeing these beautiful brothers enter into Gokul, all our miseries vanish.” Their song continues.

“Indeed, the very entrance of both of them near the boundaries of Gokul while returning in the evening causes everyone to be totally absorbed in thoughts of them.

“How amazing! Seeing the two brothers entering into Vraja is the fulfillment of the purpose of being endowed with sight! And this is especially true for those living entities who notice the younger one (Krishna) whose lips are decorated with a flute and whose lotus eyes send out expert signals capable of bewitching us [the gopīs].”

Again, the same feeling is expressed by one gopī to another as follows, “O friend! At the time of coming back home with his friends and cows, we watch him singing, laughing, and roaming freely, and on seeing that his restless amorous eyes are searching for something, our minds are put in constant anxiety. Alas! Indeed, that chaste lady’s eyes are the most glorious who has flute-loving Madana (Krishna) as her *madana* (enchanter).”

Krishna, the killer of the Agha demon, then played his flute in a way designed to increase the gopīs desire to associate with him. In doing so, he sometimes prevailed over the gopīs’ ordinary shyness. Since he was expert in playing flute in different ways and in attracting others in various ways, he attracted the gopīs while making it seem that he was playing the flute for only Balaram. But what also happened is that his flute playing enticed one and all from a distance.



Drawing by J. Lockwood Kipling. From the Book *Tales of the Punjab*. By Flora Annie Steel. Macmillan & Co. London. 1917.

Krishna's flute-playing attracted all living entities

The gopīs also expressed their hidden feelings by indicating Balaram as follows:

*veṇoḥ śikṣāṁ atha racayator dhenu-rakṣādi-lakṣyān
nānāranyaṁ prati viharator bibhṛator yaṣṭi-rajjū
stambhaṁ lole calanam acale kurvator atyapūrvam
bhrātror āśid bata tanu-bhṛtām dharmato vaiparītyam*

On the pretext of playing his flute, protecting cows, etc., these two brothers roam freely in various forests, each holding a stick and a rope. In their presence, the moving water stops and immovable objects, such as mountains, move. Just see how they evoke opposite characteristics in everyone!

The meaning of this verse is, “These two are causing everyone’s natural state (*dharma*) to be broken. Certainly the younger one, Krishna, will be the cause of the complete uprooting of our religiosity (*dharma*).”

Seeing that the song sung by him and his brother was attracting everyone, Krishna thought, “Oh! My objective was to attract the gopīs and especially Radhika. However, since everyone has now become addicted to the sound of my flute, it is not appropriate

to suddenly stop playing. Therefore, I shall play the flute for everyone. For the different classes of living entities born in different species, I shall play the flute in such a way that they will all be either attracted, bewitched, or both. I will try to play the flute to educate everyone in this way, and bewitchment or attraction will be generated by playing appropriate tunes that express the essence of all the notes of music.”

Thinking in this way, Krishna tried out his technique on various categories of living entities and managed to enchant them all — except for the *gopīs*, for whom the only result was to increase the anxiety within their hearts.

The *gopīs* description of the enchantment of the cows is described as follows:

*harer vaktraṁ veṇu-dhvani-miśatayā varṣati sudhām
pibaty etāṁ gavyā yad anu rasanā-karṇa-yugalam
ahāsīt prastabdhā nija-viṣayam anyā tu rasanā
kim etat kim naitad bhavati kim ivaitat kim iti vā*

From the lips of Lord Hari, nectar is dripping on the pretext of flute-sounds. Drinking this nectar, the cow's ears have turned into tongues and their actual tongues have become totally motionless, not caring for food. Thus the ears of the cows think, “What is this nectar? What is it not? How to attain it and who will get it?” (Text 46)

What they actually wanted to say was: “The flute has produced the same effect on the cows and on us. Still, there is some difference between their condition and ours because these cows can at every moment look at the face of Krishna, whereas we don't even know in which *yuga* we will have the same good fortune.”

On the next day, Krishna continued his flute-education and enchanted all the forest-residing living entities. This was expressed by the *gopīs* as follows:

*vaṁśaḥ so 'yaṁ tu vītaṁśaḥ kaṁśa-śatror itīyate
tena śaṁsanato yānti vidhvaṁsaṁ mṛga-pakṣiṇaḥ*

“O friends! Just see how the flute appears to be a net designed to capture all the living entities of the forest. Simply on hearing the flute, all of them are trapped into their destruction!” (Text 48)

They also made the following statement, “This Vrindavan forest is itself expanding its glories on the surface of the earth. And Sri Krishna roams around here, distributing auspiciousness everywhere. When the flute plays, the peacocks dance in various ways, and the other living entities from the forest dance with them. In this way, Vrindavan appears to be a dancing arena.”

By this, the *gopīs* indicated, “We're not fortunate enough to attain the auspicious life of Vrindavan. Even the peacocks here are the object of our worship, for their piety increases every moment by dancing freely in this beautiful place. We *gopīs* are householders literally held captive in our homes. We are worse than purchased cattle, because the cattle can at least freely glance at Krishna, while we can't even do that for a fraction of a moment.”

On the next day, Krishna enticed the female deer of Vrindavan. That was described by the *gopīs* as follows, “O dear *sakhi*, it's amazing that even though these deer are devoid of intelligence [due to their birth], they exceed our good fortune by their attraction to the sounds of the flute. Thus they approach Krishna and stand bewitched in front of him like objects in a painting. By their sidelong glances, they also seem to be offering their worship to Krishna.”

By this, the *gopīs* indicated, “We are born as ladies in the esteemed human species which is greatly respected by intelligent men. Our husbands are residents of Vrindavan and loving devotees of Krishna. In these regards, these deer couples are not as



Painting by B. K. Mitra. Gita Press. Gorakhpur. Circa 1950s.

Enchanting the universe with the sound of his flute

fortunate as us, yet they are able to approach Krishna as a couple and gaze at him (while we can't do the same with our husbands). Fie on our fortunes, which cannot match the good fortune of these deer couples!"

The next day, Krishna particularly enticed the birds. Seeing this, the *gopīs* said, "In this forest of Vraja, all the birds have been described [in the scriptures] as sages (*munis*). We know very well that Krishna is their guru. If this is not the case, then why do they sit around him silently whenever he plays a song on the flute?"

By this, they wanted to express the following embarrassment, "Krishna is a *muni* and all these birds are also *munis*, yet none of us *gopīs* are eligible to acquire the qualifications of having an audience of this *muni* (Krishna), since we lack the eligibility."

The next day, Krishna enticed even the heavenly damsels by the sound of his flute. The *gopīs* described it as follows, "Attracted by the qualities of the song of the flute, the damsels of heaven gathered around Krishna in their airplanes. Their attraction to Krishna's beautiful form and enticing activities captured them so that they completely forgot themselves. Thus they asked themselves, 'What did we hear? What did we see?' In this way they completely forgot that their hair, ornaments, etc., were disarrayed by the sounds of the flute."



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By this, the *gopīs* indicated, "When even the damsels of heaven become enticed by the flute-song of Krishna, what can be said about us poor earthly girls of Vraja? How can we resist it?"

In this way, the sound of the flute turned the lively souls into motionless entities and the motionless objects into lively ones. The *gopīs* [who were earlier lively] now belonged to the category of motionless entities, and it is certainly difficult to turn them into lively souls. In other words, the effect of the flute seems irreversible.

Regarding the rivers, the *gopīs* expressed, "These auspicious ladies (rivers) on hearing the song of the flute attained a motionless state, forming whorls. They swelled up and their waters started overflowing with joy. The swans and other water creatures made joyous sounds that appeared as the sounds of the river's ornaments. In this maddened state, they approached Krishna and through their delicate hands (waves), they embraced Krishna's feet and offered him their choicest lotus flowers as a gift."

By this, the *gopīs* actually meant, "Alas! Alas! These rivers are the chaste wives of the ocean, and yet they overrode their chastity and ran to meet Krishna. Oh! Then what to speak of us? How can we resist it? These rivers have attained the greatest piety in previous lives and are hence able to freely mingle with him, while our fortunes are not comparable to their immense good fortune. Better we stay detached from all happiness or sorrow."

The next day, they described the dark clouds as follows, "They are Murari's friends, not only because they share the same hue, but also because they mutually benefit each other. When Murari plays the *malhāra-rāga* to attract them, they get attracted and provide him shade from the sun's heat."

The inner meaning of the *gopīs* was, "Just see these inert clouds, who although situated at a distance can serve Krishna by providing cooling shade which results from their internal flow of love! Alas! We *gopīs* were renowned with the reputation that our life-breaths are dependent only on Krishna. Yet even with such a reputation, we are now seen alive even though we are unable to serve Krishna. Fie on this life!"

(To be continued.)

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 312

Śrī Ramā Ekādaśī

30 October 2013

Circulation 6,650

Highlights

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Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

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GOING BEYOND SIXTEEN ROUNDS

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I am very glad to learn that you are chanting forty-eight rounds. Actually, it is all right to chant sixty-four rounds. If one is able to chant more than sixteen rounds, up to sixty-four, it is very good. Try to increase it, but never decrease it. (Letter, 17 December 1967.)

I shall advise you again to chant always, increasing the counting. Sixteen rounds is generally prescribed, but for the time being you can stop all other activities and increase the chanting to 64 rounds. (Letter, 12 February 1968.)

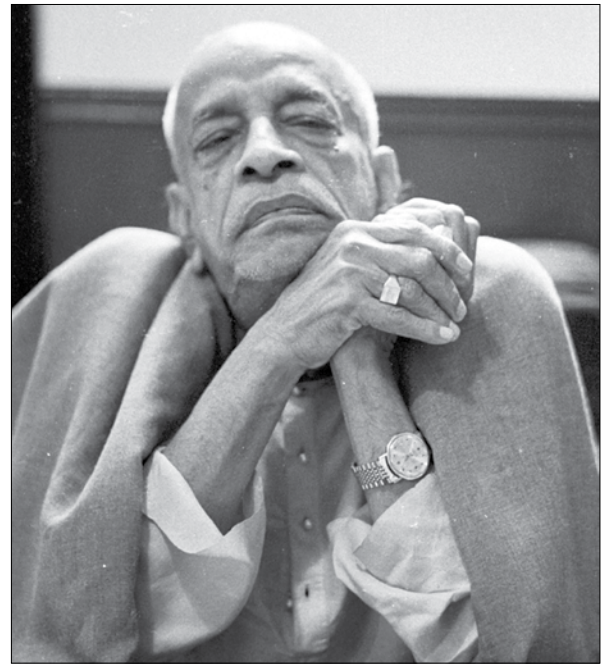
It is very good if you can chant 64 rounds; this is very nice if you can do it. But first of all we should not be disturbed by any circumstances. If you do become disturbed then this means you are still deficient in reaching the point. (Letter, 23 March 1969.)

It is very encouraging to me that you are regularly chanting your twenty rounds of beads daily. Be careful never to decrease, but increase the number and you will become stronger in Krishna consciousness. (Letter, 3 March 1970.)

PURE VAISHNAVAS RELISH THE HOLY NAME

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

A pure *vaiṣṇava* who is completely surrendered to the holy name is always with Krishna. He sees Krishna



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

everywhere at every moment. *yāhān netra paḍe tāhān dekhaye āmāre* — Wherever he looks he sees the all-beautiful form of Krishna, Shyamasundar, and all the transcendental pastimes. At every moment he tastes such nectarean mellows, *nāmāmṛta*. He has no taste for material mellows or material beauty. If by chance it unconsciously enters into the mind, immediately he curls his lips and spits at it.

— Flow of Nectar, p. 104. Gopal Jiu Publications. From a lecture, Bhubaneswar, 21 September 1994.

LESSONS IN LOVE AND FLUTE

Adapted from Srila Jīva Goswami's Gopāla-campū, pūrva, chapter 17

Madhukantha continues to narrate the gopīs description of how so many different entities had become enticed by the flute-play.

It was amazing to see that even the stony hills were blissfully worshiping the Lord. The *gopīs* said, “Respected Sri Govardhan has clearly attained the position of *hari-dāsa-varya*, the topmost servant of the Lord, for when Krishna along with Balaram climb upon it and play the flute constantly it becomes ecstatic by the touch of their lotus feet. This ecstasy results in bodily transformations in the form of seeds sprouting on its surface, and through these sprouted seeds and its waterfalls it serves Krishna’s friends, Krishna’s cows, and Krishna himself.

“Leaving aside Govardhan’s condition, look instead at this other hill! It has assumed complete smoothness on listening to the flute of Krishna and has become known as *cikṣaṇa*, the slippery mountain. Krishna’s footprints embedded on it are the constant witness of this fact.”

In a hidden way, the *gopīs* were saying:

*mahatām padavīm āptuṁ vāñchā yadyapi dhṛṣṭatā
tathāpy anugatis teṣāṁ bhāti ced asti dṛṣṭatā*

“Even though the desire to attain the same position as saintly souls is nothing but impudence, still if one acts according to the actions of the previous great souls, the path to one’s saintliness will be open.” (Text 63)

Thinking about the *gopīs* feelings and knowing their state of madness, the heavy-hearted Madhukantha’s voice choked. He covered his face with a cloth and started to cry. Seeing this, all the members of the assembly merged into an ocean of unhappiness.

He then repeated the words uttered by Sri Radha: “The flute is extremely pious, for even though it is not of feminine gender, it is able to give up all shyness and drink the nectar flowing from Krishna’s lips, which in fact belong to the *gopīs*. The flute is never satisfied by this nectar, and when it has overfed on it, the flute emits sounds that cause the rivers to swell up with joy and the trees to shed tears in the form of dripping honey.”

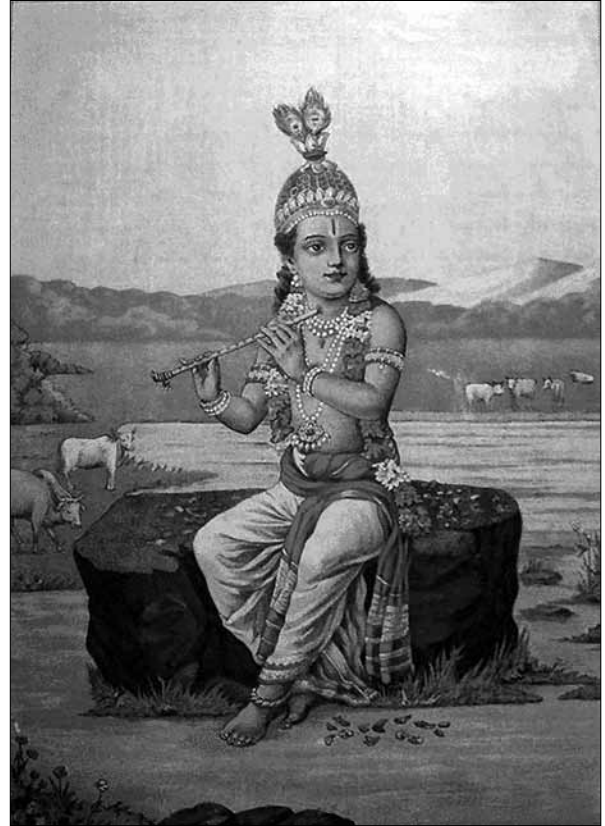
The inner meaning of Radharani’s statement was, “I do not wish for the body of a lady born in a glorious family. I desire to have the body of a bamboo rod,

because the bamboo-flute freely mingles with Krishna in an ever-increasingly eager mood. This is impossible in the body of a chaste lady. Even if by assuming the body of a bamboo I lose my human consciousness, then at least Krishna will know that in separation from him this Radhika turned into wood.”

Radharani thought within herself as follows, “O shark earrings! You kiss his cheeks regularly! O flute! You relish his lip-nectar! O garland of forest flowers! You directly embrace him! Suits you all well, for all of you have gone beyond scriptural rules and regulations. Alas! The very scriptural rules that promised us our desired object clearly ended up cheating us and depriving us of it.

“And see! Even these ordinary jewels do not give up the body of Hari. What then to speak of us ladies affected by Cupid? If he would not have freely associated with others then there would be no cause for complaint, but how can I tolerate the sight of him openly embracing his friends?”

In this way, the serene narration of the flute-play was going on when suddenly a situation presented itself and caused a disturbance. This will be described in the morning [the next chapter]. Folding his palms, Madhukantha said again, O Radhe! No one knows



Unknown artist



Unknown artist

Krishna plays his flute

how much effort your beloved puts into meeting you because his efforts are known only to himself.”

In this way, the narration ended and everyone returned to their homes.

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

THE DOG-EATER’S QUALIFICATION

*Sri Vallabhacharya’s Commentary on
Śrīmad-bhāgavatam 3.33.6*

*yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo ‘pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt*

To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the supreme person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the supreme personality of godhead or chants about him, hears about his pastimes, offers him obeisances, or even remembers him.

Commentary:

*tatra prathamam āha — yasya bhagavato nāmadheyasya
guroḥ sakāśāc chravaṇānantaram yad anukīrtanam,*

*tena śvādo ‘pi cāṇḍālo ‘pi sadyaḥ savanāya somābhiṣava
yogyatvāya sadyas tasminn eva janmani avakalpate. kutaḥ
punas tava darśanāt, somābhiṣava yogyo bhavatīti kiṁ
vaktavyam ity arthah.*

Now the first astonishment [regarding glories of the holy name] is described [here in verse 6]: The Lord’s respectable name when heard due to the proximity of *śrī-guru*, and thereafter when it is repeated, makes a *cāṇḍāla*, dog-eater, immediately eligible to perform a soma-yajña. *Sadyaḥ* here means “in this very life”. What then to speak of those who have had your direct audience? The implied meaning is that if the mere chanting of your name is enough to qualify one for a soma-yajña, what to speak of your direct audience?

*śravaṇānantaram kīrtana-kathanād vaiṣṇava-dīkṣayā
mantropadeśa para iti kecit.*

Some, however, say that it is by first hearing from a guru, then accepting *vaiṣṇava-mantra* initiation, and thereafter regularly chanting that mantra that one becomes qualified.

*sadyaḥ savanāya iti “sarvamedhe vāyave cāṇḍālam” iti
vākyāt. paryagnikaraṇa paryantam tad-yogyatvam ity apare.*

The words “*sadyaḥ savanāya*” (he immediately becomes qualified for soma-yajña) is actually from a *śruti* where it is said “in all sacrifices, the *cāṇḍāla* is an object for Vayu”. Some, however, say that the *cāṇḍāla*’s role is only up to the carrying of fire around the sacrificial animal.

Translator’s note: Someone may raise an objection here, “We have never heard of such a thing before in our traditions. This is something very astonishing to us. It even appears to be against the conclusions of all *dharma-sāstras*.” To this, Sri Vallabhacharya replies:

*vastutas tu āścarya-rūpaṁ mātmyam eva
laukikopapattya cet siddhayet, āścaryam eva na bhavet.*

In reality, if the astonishing glories of the holy name would lead to something found ordinarily within this world, then it would no longer be astonishing.

Translator’s Note: In other words, if the holy name would lead to an achievement that is already present in the material world, then what type of a glory would it be? Therefore, the glory of the holy name must be such that it should bestow something which has not been bestowed by other processes, *i.e.* the eligibility for everything. Sri Vallabhacharya now explains how the process works:

adharmā saṁskṛta bhūta viśeṣair hi cāṇḍālādi śarīram ārabhyate, sarvotkṛṣṭa dharma-saṁskṛta-bhūta-viśeṣais tu brāhmaṇa śarīram. bhagavan nāmnā dikṣayā prāptena vā sarvān doṣān autpattikān parihṛtya, tāny eva bhūtāny utkṛṣṭa saṁskāreṇa saṁskṛtāni kriyanta iti nāmno yuktam eva mātmyam. anena sarva-doṣa-nāśana-pūrvaka sarva-guṇopapādatvaṁ nāmna uktam.

A certain living entity is endowed with a low birth, viz. cāṇḍāla, due to previous irreligious impressions. Another living entity is endowed with a brāhmaṇa birth due to previous religious impressions. By chanting the holy names of the Lord or by taking initiation [from a vaiṣṇava], all faults that one is born with are cleared and one becomes endowed with all good impressions. Therefore, the glorification of the holy name is appropriate. Through the holy names, all faults are destroyed and all merits are bestowed.

śravaṇa yogyenānukīrtanena vā. śravaṇena doṣa-nivṛttiḥ kīrtanena guṇādhānam iti vā.

It can be said that the eligibility [for performing soma-yajña] comes by hearing the names or by chanting them repeatedly. Or it can be said that by hearing the names all faults are destroyed, and by chanting them all good qualities are bestowed.

nanv etad āścaryam ucyata ity āśaṅkya kaimutika-nyāyena tad upapādayati — yat-prahvaṇād yat-

smaraṇād iti. prahvo namrībhāvo namanam iti yāvat. namrībhāvasyākhyānam aprasiddham. smaraṇasya tu vālmīkeḥ. sa hi cāṇḍāla eva mārṅga-ghātakāḥ. ṛṣer upadeśāt pūrvam maharṣi-bhāvanām kṛtvā paścād rāma-smaraṇena tasminn eva janmani vālmīkir jāta iti na kiñcid anupapannam. ata eva kvacid ity uktam. yatra nāma rūpaṁ vā sva-sāmarthyam prakāṣayati tatraivam eveti ati-prasaktir api nivāritā.

If someone interjects — “Are only the processes of hearing and chanting astonishing?”, then to further demonstrate the superiority of the holy name, it is said — “yat prahvaṇād yat smaraṇāt” Not only the processes of hearing and chanting but also the processes of paying obeisances and remembering are astonishing. The term ‘prahva’ indicates the feeling of humility felt during the process of paying obeisances to the Lord. The history regarding the low-born devotee who achieved perfection through paying obeisances (prahva) is not well known. What is well known is the history of the low-born devotee who attained perfection through remembrance (smaraṇa), and that devotee is Valmiki. He indeed was a cāṇḍāla, engaged in robbing and killing people on the roadside. Before he got initiation and instructions from sages, he put faith in the instructions of the great sages and desired to be like them. Thereafter, by remembering Lord Rama continuously he attained success in that very life itself. In this narration, there is no impropriety. Indeed, wherever the holy name manifests its form or its caliber, verily even the most impossible rules become possible.

śvadaś cāṇḍālānām adhamāḥ. utkṛṣṭasyottamatve kaḥ sandeha ity “api” śabdārthaḥ. te darśanāt savanāya punaḥ kutaḥ kalpata iti vaktavyam ity arthāt. evaṁ paryavasāna vṛttyā nāmaśravaṇāder mātmyam uktam.

The dog-eater is the lowest among cāṇḍālas. The term “api” in this verse indicates that when even the lowest can be elevated, what to speak of those who are already elevated? What then to speak of the eligibility for performing a soma-yajña by those who have had a direct sight of the Lord? In this way, the glories of the holy name are spoken in successive increments, until a pinnacle is reached. ॥

— Transliterated from Sanskrit and translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Śrīmad-bhāgavatam with multiple commentaries edited by Sri Krishna Shankar Shastri. Ahmedabad. 1973.

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

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Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 313

Śrī Utthānā Ekādaśī

13 November 2013

Circulation 6,710

Highlights

- **THE BHAGAVATAM PREDATES VOPADEV**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **"NO INTEREST"**

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

- **NOT BY VOPADEV**

From a commentary on Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan's Siddhānta-darpaṇa

- **Definitions of Bhakti**

Various Authors

- **Shyam has come to Nadia**

Sri Harivallabha Das



THE BHAGAVATAM PREDATES VOPADEV

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

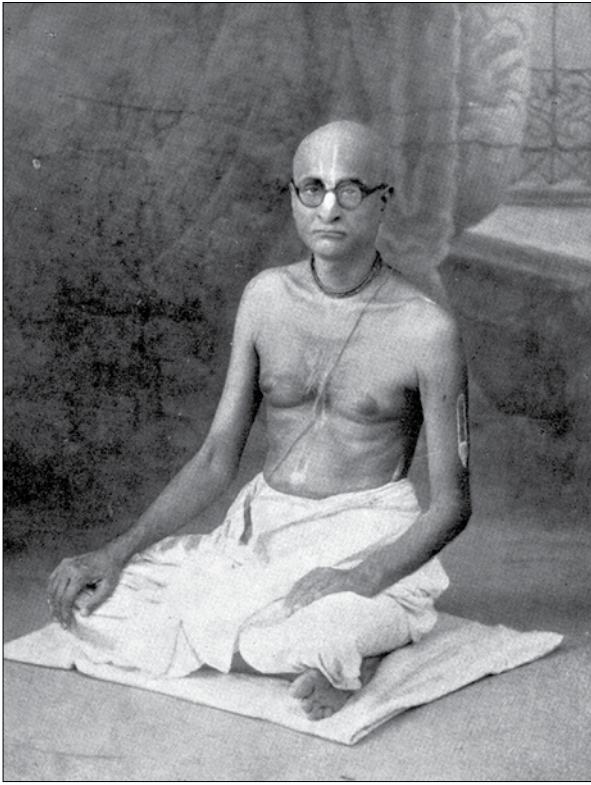
Some Māyāvādī scholars argue that Śrīmad Bhāgavatam was not compiled by Sri Vyasa-dev. And some of them suggest that this book is a modern creation written by someone named Vopadev. In order to refute such meaningless arguments, Sri Sridhar Svami points out that there is reference to the Bhāgavatam in many of the oldest Purāṇas. This first śloka of the Bhāgavatam begins with the Gāyatrī mantra. There is reference to this in the Matsya Purāṇa, which is the oldest Purāṇa. In that Purāṇa it is said about the Bhāgavatam that in it there are many narrations of spiritual instructions, that it begins with the Gāyatrī mantra, and that it contains the history of Vritrasura. Anyone who makes a gift of this great work on a full moon day attains to the highest perfection of life by returning to Godhead. There is reference to the Bhāgavatam in other Purāṇas also, where it is clearly stated that this work was finished in twelve cantos, which include eighteen thousand ślokas. In the Padma Purāṇa also there is reference to the Bhāgavatam in a conversation between Gautam and Maharaja Ambarish. The king was advised therein to read regularly Śrīmad Bhāgavatam if he desired liberation from material bondage. Under the circumstances, there is no doubt about the authority



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of the Bhāgavatam. Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jiva Goswami, Sanatan Goswami, Viswanath Chakravarti, Vallabhacharya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Chaitanya made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages. — Purport to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.1.1



“NO INTEREST”

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: Why are we not inclined toward the Lord’s service?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada: We have no inclination toward God and no inclination to remedy that situation. Therefore we need an expert doctor. Our inclination toward the Lord will arise if we associate with devotees. Just as a veterinary surgeon tactfully places medicine in an animal’s mouth, similarly the spiritual master and the devotees, who are just like expert doctors, bestow mercy on us. Despite our reluctance they forcibly pour the mellows of devotional service into our mouths. ॐ

— From *Amṛta Vani*, collected teachings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. chapter 51. Compiled in Bengali by Sri Bhakti Bhagavat Mayukha Maharaja. Adapted and translated into English by Bhumiapati Das and Isvara Das. Touchstone Media. Mumbai. 2004.

NOT BY VOPADEV

**From Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan’s
Siddhānta-darpaṇa 6.3
with commentary by Sri Nanda Mishra**

vopadeva-kṛtatve 'tra vopadeva-purābhavaiḥ
katharṇi ṭikāḥ kṛtāḥ saṁsyur hanumac-citsukhādibhiḥ

How is it possible that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* when it is well known that personalities

like Sri Hanumat, Sri Chitsukha, etc., who lived before him, have commented on it?

Commentary: vopadeva-kṛtatvaṁ sarvathā nāstīty āha—vopadeveti. yady etad bhāgavatam vopadevena vyaracīty ucyate, tarhi tasmāt pūrvaṁ jātair hanumad-ādibhis tasmin kṛtāḥ ṭikāḥ kathā sambhaveyuh? hanumān śrī-rāma-pārśadaś citsukhaś cācāryaḥ śrīmad-bhāgavatam vyācakhyau. śrī-madhva-muniḥ sva-bhāṣye tad-vākyāny udājahāra. sa eva śrī-bhāgavata-tātparyam ca kṛtavān. tātparyasyāpi prabodhiniḥ ṭikāsti. śrīmad-bhāgavata-mātra-varṇite mṛd-bhakṣaṇa-vastra-haraṇe śrī-govindāṣṭake varṇayan śaṅkarācārya 'pi tad vyākhyātavān eva. śrī-madhva-śaṅkarau hi sama-kāla-prasiddhau. śaṅkarācārya-samayād uttare vatsara-śata-dvaye vyatīte vopadevo 'bhūd iti śrī-rāmāśramādibhir likhitam. yadaite hanumad-ādayas tasya vyākhyānādi cakrus tadā vopadevasya janmāpi nābhūd iti tasya tat-kartṛtvaṁ kathayan bhrānta-dhīr eva

This verse mentions how it is entirely impossible that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

If it is assumed that Sri Vopadev wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* then how is it possible that personalities predating him such as Sri Hanumat wrote commentaries on it? The commentator Hanumat refers to Hanuman, who is none other than the associate of Lord Rama, and Chitsukha is another commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*. Words from his commentary have been mentioned by the revered Sri Madhvacharya in his own commentary. It is Madhvacharya who also wrote the *Bhāgavata-tātparya*. The *prabodhini* is a sub-commentary on the *Bhāgavata-tātparya* of Madhvacharya. Topics from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, like Krishna’s eating of dirt and his stealing of the *gopī*s clothes, have been narrated in Shankaracharya’s *Govindāṣṭakam*. In this way it is understood that even Shankaracharya knew and wrote about Krishna’s pastimes given in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It is well known that Sri Madhvacharya and Sri Adi Shankara were almost contemporaries. It has been written clearly by Sri Ramashram Swami and others that Sri Vopadev appeared at least two hundred years after Sri Shankaracharya.

When commentators such as Hanumat and Chitsukha wrote their commentaries, Sri Vopadev was not even born! Thus, those who say that Vopadev was the composer are certainly misled. ॐ

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

Unknown artist. Gita Press, circa 1960



DEFINITIONS OF BHAKTI

Various Authors

1) Sri Vyasadeva

pūjādiṣv anurāga iti pārāśaryaḥ

Srila Vyasadeva, the son of Parashar Muni, says that ‘bhakti’ means ‘fond attachment for worshiping the Lord in various ways’. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* 16)

2) Sri Garga Muni

kathādiṣv iti gargaḥ

Garga Muni says that ‘bhakti’ means ‘fondness for narrations about the Lord, by the Lord, etc.’ (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 17)

3) Sri Shandilya Muni

ātma-raty-avirodheneti śāṇḍilyaḥ

Shandilya Muni says that ‘bhakti’ means ‘taking unobstructed pleasure in the self’. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 18)

4) Sri Narada Muni

nāradas tu tad-arpitākhlilācārātā tad-vismaraṇe parama-vyākulateti

Narada, however, says that ‘bhakti’ means ‘offering one’s every act to the Supreme Lord and feeling extreme distress in forgetting him’. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 19)

sā tv asmin parama-prema-rūpā amṛta-svarūpā ca

Devotional service manifests as the most elevated, pure love for God. This pure love for God is eternal. (*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 2-3)

5) Srila Rupa Goswami

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktāṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanāṁ bhaktir ucyate*

The act of engaging the senses that are freed from all designations and purified by unflinching dedication in the service of Lord Hrishikesh, the master of the senses, is known as ‘bhakti’. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12)

6) Sri Madhusudana Saraswati

*drutasya bhagavad-dharmād dhārāvāhikatām gatā
sarveṣe manaso vṛttir bhaktir ity abhidhīyate*

When, by executing the activities of *bhāgavata-dharma*, the melted tendencies of the mind flow in streams towards the Supreme Lord, then such tendencies are to be known as ‘bhakti’. (*Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, 3)

— *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*. Translation and Commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and disciples.

— *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyanam*. Sanskrit text available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.com)



Unknown artist



SHYAM HAS COME TO NADIA Sri Harivallabha Das

śyāmera tanu ava gaura-varaṇa
gokula choḍi ava nadīyā ā-ola
varṁśi choḍi kīratana

(Refrain) He whose body was dark now has a fair



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complexion. Leaving Gokul he came to Nadia. Putting down his flute he sings the holy names.

kālindī-taṭa choḍi sura-sarita-taṭe
avahum karata vilāsa
aruṇa-varaṇa ḍora-kaupīna ava
choḍi pīta-dhaḍā bāsa

Leaving the Yamuna he enjoys pastimes on the Ganga's banks. Putting down his yellow garments he wears the saffron cloth of a sannyaśi.

vāme nahata ava rā-i sudhā-mukhī
vraja-vadhū nahata niyaḍe
gadādhara paṇḍita phirata vāme ava
sadā sa-e bhakata vihare

Sweet-faced Radha is no longer at his left. The vraja-gopīs are no longer around him. Now Gadadhar Pandit is at his left as he enjoys pastimes with his devotees.

choḍi mohana cūḍā śīre śikhā rākhala
mukhe kahata rārā rārā
kahe hari-vallabha teracha cāhani choḍi
du-nayane galata dhārā

He abandoned his glorious hair and wears a śikhā. With his mouth he now loudly calls the holy names. Hari-vallabha Das says that the Lord has turned away from crooked, playful glances and makes a flooding river of tears flow from his eyes. ❀

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 314

Śrī Utpannā Ekādaśī

29 November 2013

Circulation 6,750

Highlights

- **EVEN BUTCHERS ARE WELCOME**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

- **SERVE IN UNITY**

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

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Adapted from **Skanda Purāṇa**

- **JOYFUL PASTIMES WITH PARENTS**

From Srila Rupa Goswami's **Padyāvalī**, verses 149 – 150

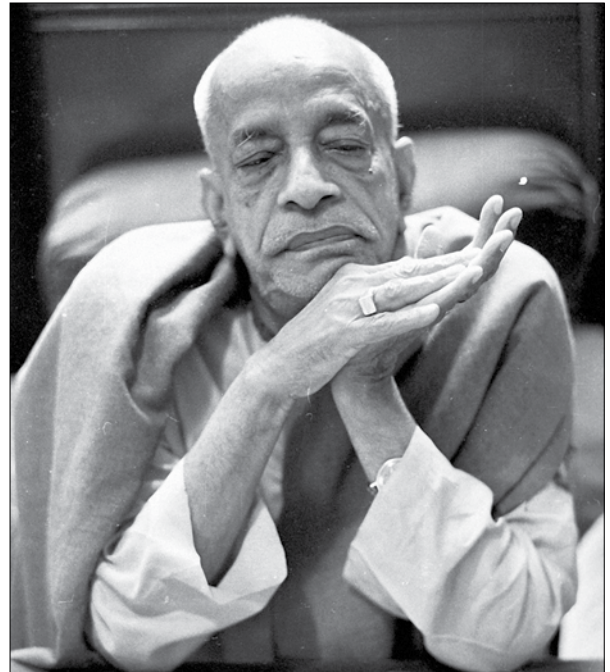


EVEN BUTCHERS ARE WELCOME

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Regarding propaganda against animal slaughter in Back to Godhead magazine, please do not print any picture showing how a cow is being murdered. This will pollute the whole atmosphere. We are not meant for moving anyone's sentiment against animal slaughter. We are not Buddhists or Jains – their main propaganda is against animal slaughter. Even the so-called vegetarians who do not take Krishna prasādam are as sinful as the non-vegetarians. Our propaganda is different, to make people Krishna conscious, which automatically makes them sympathetic against any kind of animal slaughter. According to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, one living entity subsists on the life of other living entities, either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. But we are neither of them. We are neither vegetarian nor non-vegetarian. We are transcendental. We are concerned with kṛṣṇa-prasādam. Try to popularize kṛṣṇa-prasādam as you have already done. People will naturally become vegetarian without any ghastly propaganda. The pictures of a mahājana or similar pictures for propagating the Bhāgavata conclusion should be our objective. There are so many subject matters that we could have pictures of. We follow four principles. So, for example, we could



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

publish so many pictures of illicit sex life, but that will not advance our cause. Similarly, we may make propaganda against animal slaughter, but that will not advance our real cause. Krishna consciousness is based on pure understanding, not on any sentimental provocation. People must be intelligent enough to catch this Krishna consciousness movement without being carried away by any sentimental wave. We should

always remember that we do not belong to any group like the *karmis*, *jñānis*, or yogis. We belong to pure devotional service group, following in the footprints of great *mahājanas*. Our purpose should be that we are on one side and all others are on the other side. We deprecate everyone, even one who is against animal slaughter. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is clearly said that there are two classes of activities — pious and impious. We do not favor either of them. Neither do we favor any philosophical speculation. We simply stick to Krishna and wish to render loving transcendental service unto him. That should be our main objective, and the policy of Back to Godhead must be pursued in this line. I hope you will understand me rightly. Everyone who is not a Krishna conscious person is a butcher. Even the so-called pious man who is not in Krishna consciousness is also a butcher because he is killing his own self. In our view, everyone is a butcher and everyone is also a thief, because he is enjoying Krishna's property. So how can we discriminate who is honest and dishonest, butcher and not butcher? Our only test is how one is taking to Krishna consciousness. Even if a so-called butcher comes, we welcome him to chant Hare Krishna. ❧

— Letter to Rayarama. 19 November 1968.

SERVE IN UNITY

**Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakur Prabhupada**

We, surrounded by enemies, are determined to engage in the service of Lord Hari and his devotees. All of us are more or less forgetful of Lord Krishna while serving the six enemies. All of you together should serve Lord Hari with unity. This is my request. *Ekāki āmāra nāhi pāya bala*. “I have no strength to do it alone.” Remembering this line, all of you should continue to execute *kīrtana-yajña*, which is the goal of life. The responsibility of the leaders in charge of the execution of *kīrtana-yajña* is that while engaging in the service of Hari they should make friendship with all, and, especially, satisfy the *vaiṣṇavas*. ❧

— Letter. 26 June 1927. Published in *Patrāmṛta*, *Nectar from Letters*. Translated by Bhumiapati Das. Touchstone Media. 2012. Kolkata.

THE MEANING OF GOOD FORTUNE

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The tenth canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* [10.51.53] says:

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamah*

*sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate matiḥ*

O infallible Lord, the *jīvas* are wandering here in many universes, very tightly bound up in material bondage. If by good fortune someone meets a *vaiṣṇava-sādhū*, *sad-guru*, then his life is completely changed. He now becomes *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. Now he will develop devotion for Krishna and will be free from material bondage. One who has seen or met such a *vaiṣṇava-sādhū* is very fortunate, *bhāgyavān*. Here in this material world, if someone meets the president of the country, he thinks, “Oh, I met the president! I am very fortunate!” But we are not speaking about that kind of fortune. One should understand what sort of fortune it is to meet guru. It cannot be compared with meeting the president of the country. It is incomparable. Up till now, in many, many hundreds and thousands of lives, I was either a *karmī*, a *jñānī*, a *bhogī*, or a *tyāgī*. But now I have become *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*. Now I am situated in my constitutional position, *jīvera* ‘*svarūpa*’ *haya kṛṣṇera* ‘*nitya-dāsa*’, as an eternal servant of Krishna [Cc. *madhya* 20.108]. That is the constitutional position of the *jīva*. I was not in that position. But from today I am in that situation because I saw such a *sad-guru*, *vaiṣṇava-thākura*. He cast his merciful glance on me. Now everything is completely changed.

For hundreds and thousands of lives you have been fallen, crying, crying and suffering in this deep dark well of material existence. Now you have seen and met such a person, such a *sad-guru*. Now the time has come that your suffering will be done away with forever. That is good fortune. That is *bhāgya*. One's suffering is forever done away with — finished, no more. This is good fortune. ❧

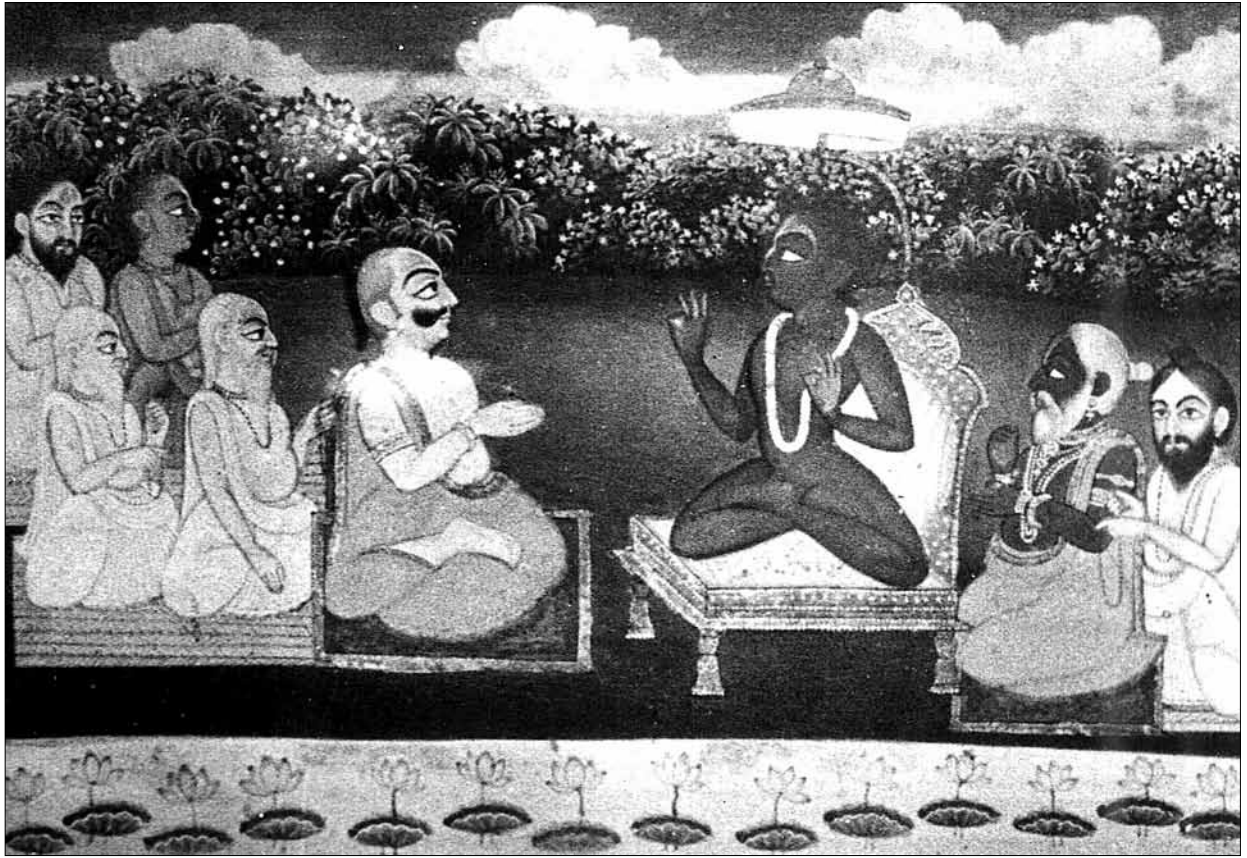
— When Good Fortune Arises, p. 335-336. Lecture, Seattle, 18 May 1993.

THE BIRTH OF SUKADEV GOSWAMI

Adapted from *Skanda Purāṇa*, canto 6, chapter 143

When the Kuru dynasty faced extinction upon the death of Vichitravirya, who had no children, Srila Vyasadev begot three children at the urging of his mother Satyavati. Two were begotten within the wombs of Vichitravirya's two widows, and the third, Vidura, was begotten in a maidservant.

Thereafter, Srila Vyasadev thought about accepting a wife, and so he asked the sage Jabali for his daughter named Chetika. The sage happily gave his daughter to Vyasadev, and in due course of time she became pregnant. But even after twelve



Unknown artist.

Sukadev Goswami speaks Śrīmad Bhāgavatam to Maharaja Parikshit

years had passed the child was not delivered from his mother's womb. That intelligent boy, even while within his mother's womb, memorized whatever he happened to hear. Thus, even before his birth the child became a master of the Vedas and *Purāṇas*. Actually, he was satisfied to remain within the womb, reciting the Vedic texts, and never thought of coming out into the world.

However, as the child continued to grow, this condition became painful for his mother. Vyasadev then asked, "Who are you that has entered the womb of my wife? Why don't you come out? Do you want to kill your mother?"

The fetus replied:

*rākṣaso 'haṁ piśāco 'haṁ devo 'haṁ mānuṣas tathā
gajo 'haṁ turagaś cāpi kukkuṭaś chāga eva ca
yonīnām caturāśīti lakṣāṇy eva ca saṅkhyayā
bhrānto 'haṁ teṣu sarveṣu tat ko 'haṁ prabavāmi kim
sāmprataṁ mānuṣo bhūtvā jaṭharaṁ samupāśritaḥ
mānuṣye 'tra kariṣyāmi niṣkramaṁ na kathaṁcāna
nirviṇo bhramamāṇo 'tra saṁsāre dāruṇe tataḥ
atrastho bhava-nirmukto yogābhyāsa ratas sadā
mokṣa-mārga prayāsyāmi tato mokṣam asaṁśayam*

"I am a Rakshasha, I am a Pishacha, I am a demigod, I am a human being, I am an elephant, I am a horse, I am a chicken, and I am a goat. There are eight million, four hundred thousand species of life and I have appeared in all of these forms. Now I am settled in this womb as a human embryo. I don't want to come out and face the terrible condition of material existence. Staying within the womb, I will practice yoga and meditation to free myself from material bondage. Within the womb, I have knowledge, detachment, and remembrance of my previous births. If I come out of the womb, however, I will become a victim of Lord Vishnu's external energy, *māyā*."

Srila Vyasadev replied, "Don't worry, *māyā* will not affect you. Come out of the hell in the form of the mother's womb."

The fetus said, "You must solicit the assurance of Lord Krishna himself. Only then will I be willing to come out of the womb."

Upon hearing this, Srila Vyasadev hastened to Dwarka, where he told everything to Krishna. The Lord then accompanied Srila Vyasadev to his home. Krishna told the fetus, "I guarantee that when you emerge from your mother's womb, you will not be affected by my external energy *māyā*. It is my desire that you come out now."

The boy came out of the womb, appearing as a twelve-year-old youth. He bowed down to Krishna, his mother, and his father, and then began to depart for the forest.

Srila Vyasadev said, “Wait, my dear son! I must perform the birth ceremonies for you.”

The child replied, “Thousands of birth ceremonies have been performed for me in thousands of births. They have only served to bind me to material existence.”

Krishna said to Vyasa, “Your son is a very expert speaker, like a parrot. Let him be named Suka. Give him permission to go to the forest. He will not stay at your ashram. There is no need for you to exhibit so much parental affection.”

After saying this, Krishna returned to Dwarka, riding upon the back of Garuda. Vyasadev said to Sukadev, “A son who does not obey the behest of his father will surely fall into hell. Therefore, stay here for some time.”

Sukadev Goswami replied, “Just as today I was born as your son, so in another birth you were born as my son. Therefore I am your father and you should carry out my order. Don’t deny me permission to go to the forest.”

Vyasadev argued, “First one must practice *brahmacharya*. Then he should enter householder life.

After enjoying family life, he can attain salvation as a *vānaprastha* and then as a *sannyāsī*.”

Sukadev countered, “If through celibacy liberation could be attained, impotent eunuchs would be liberated without separate endeavor. If householders can attain liberation then everyone would be liberated. If residents of the forest attain liberation then animals would easily be liberated. After arguing with his father in this way for some time, Sukadev proceeded to the forest. ❧

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JOYFUL PASTIMES WITH PARENTS

Srila Rupa Goswami’s Padyāvalī 149-150

*kāṇḍī-pulīne mayā na na mayā śailopasālye na na
nyāgrodhasya tale mayā na na mayā rādhā-pitūḥ prāṅgane
dr̥ṣṭaḥ kṛṣṇa itirite sa-niyamaṁ gopair yaśodā-pater
vismerasya puro hasan nija-grhān nīryan hariḥ pātu vaḥ*

The different *gopas* confidently said, “I did not see Krishna at the Yamuna’s shore.” “I did not see Krishna on Govardhana Hill or at the outskirts of Vraja village.” “I did not see him at the base of the banyan tree.” “I did not see him in the courtyard of Radha’s father, Maharaja Vrishabhanu.” As Nanda Maharaja became slightly dejected to hear all this, smiling Krishna slipped out of the house, from right under Nanda Maharaja’s nose. May Krishna protect you all! (composed by Sri Umapati-dhara.)

*vatsa sthāvara-kandareṣu vicaran dūra-pracāre gavāṁ
hiraṁsrān vikṣya puraḥ purāṇa-puruṣān nārāyaṇaṁ dhyāsyasi
ity uktasya yaśodayā mura-ripor vavyāj jaganti sphurad-
bimboṣṭha-dvaya-gāḍha-pīḍana-vaśād avyakta-bhāvaṁ smitam*

Mother Yashoda said, “Child, when you take care of the cows far away in the forests or the caves of Govardhana Hill and you see dangerous wild animals, you should meditate on the ancient Supreme Person, Lord Narayana, and he will protect you.” As Lord Krishna heard these words, it was only with great difficulty that he prevented a smile from appearing on his *bimba* fruit-colored lips. May that suppressed smile protect all the worlds! (composed by Sri Abhinanda) ❧

— Translated by Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California. 1989.

SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

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Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 315

Śrī Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

13 December 2013

Circulation 6,770

Highlights

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- **RIGHTS FOR SPIRITUAL INITIATION**

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- **EFFORTS VS. GURU'S MERCY**

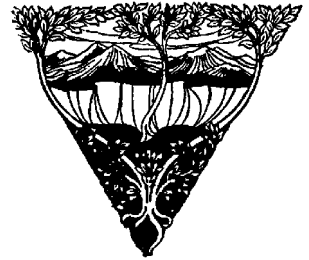
Sripad Madhvacharya's commentary on Vedānta-sūtra 3.3.44 – 45

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From the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 17.155 – 158



READ THE GITA DAILY

His Divine Grace A. C.

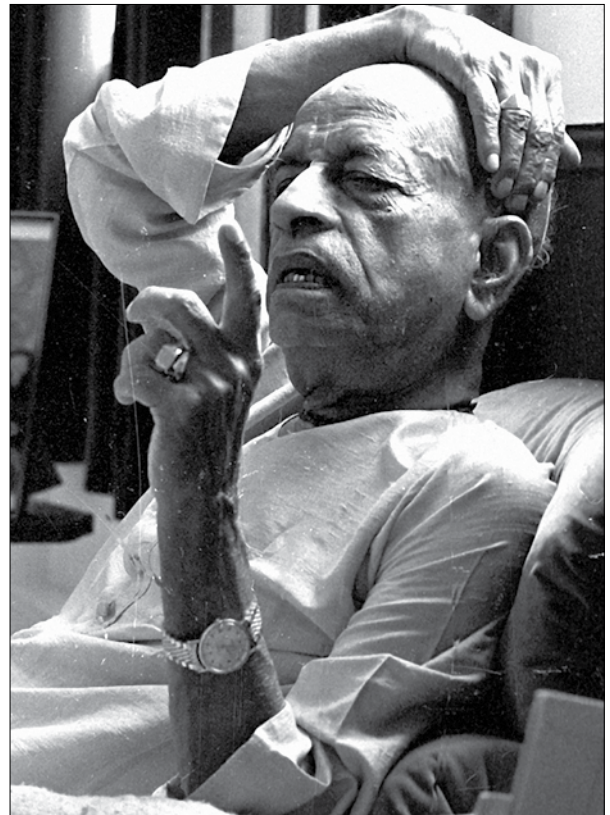
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Be sure to chant your sixteen rounds daily and read *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is, one chapter daily. Follow the four regulative principles strictly and I am sure that Krishna will see that your life quickly becomes happier in devotional service. (Letter to Arundhati, 26 January 1969.)

You should always read also, besides attending class, whenever you have time, the *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is. Then I can surely recommend to the draft board that you are a very serious student of *Bhagavad-gītā* under my supervision. (Letter to Nara Narayana, 1 February 1969.)

You must read *Bhagavad-gītā* at least a few verses every day and think about them throughout the day. The best thing is to read one chapter daily, but if you can meditate upon a few verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* every day, that is better than reading for simply one hour and then forgetting the topics until the next reading. (Letter to Paramananda, 29 July 1969.)

To give a fitting memorial to Mahatma Gandhi we must follow and propagate this particular line of spiritual activities and must daily read and propagate this particular line of spiritual activities and must daily read a chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* in congregation.



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Bhagavad-gītā is the world recognized philosophy of Indian culture and the favorite scripture of Mahatma



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Gandhi. (Letter to Mahatma Gandhi National Memorial Trust Fund, 5 July 1949.)

Krishna is personally explaining: Read *Bhagavad-gītā*, see the deity, come here daily, take *caraṇāmṛtam*. Krishna says [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.26], if possible, bring *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam* [leaf, fruit, flower, water]. In this way you become the topmost yogi and attached to Krishna. (Lecture, 22 August 1976.)

Krishna instructs us in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one who serves him in loving devotional service is delivered fully from all material contamination. Now you have your beads, so please chant at least 16 rounds daily, and read from *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is at least one chapter daily. (Letter to Turya, 5 June 1969.)

In addition to chanting our 16 rounds daily, we must all read at least one chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Read one chapter on one day and then go on to the next chapter the next day. In this way, after 18 days we will have completed one reading. After four or five such complete readings we will know *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is and our questions and doubts will be answered. We are printing these books not for money but so that all devotees will read and understand them. (Memo to all temples, 24 November 1968.)

RIGHTS FOR SPIRITUAL INITIATION

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakura Prabhupada*

Without understanding the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the concept of bondage and liberation, many people are bereft of the opportunity of receiving spiritual initiation. No learned follower of *sanātana-dharma* can disagree with the principle that each male and female has the right to spiritual initiation. The spirit soul is not a male or a female of this material world. There are many social and worldly duties which display their prominence due to a lack of realization of one's constitutional position. One is advised to surpass all those conceptions and proceed on the path of devotional service. ❧

— From *Patrāmṛta*, Nectar from the Letters, translated by Bhumipati Dasa, 2012, published by Isvara Dasa, Touchstone Media, Kolkata.

EFFORTS VS. GURU'S MERCY

*Sripad Madhvacharya's commentary on
Vedānta-sūtra 3.3.44-45*

Sripad Madhvacharya answers two questions that are commonly asked of spiritualists:

Sūtra 44: *pradānavad eva tad uktam*

Translation: “It has been said that it [spiritual knowledge] is always received [from a guru].”

Commentary: *na ca śravaṇādi mātrena dṛṣṭir bhavati. kintu setikartavyena. yathā gurudattaṁ tathaiva bhavati. “ācāryavān puruṣo veda” iti hy uktam.*

Realization doesn't happen through performing activities such as hearing alone. It is required to perform certain duties as well. These duties are to be carried out as they are received in the disciplic succession from the guru. The *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* [6.14.2] confirms this by saying — “Only a person having an *ācārya* (guru) can know the Vedas.”

guru-prasādaḥ sva-prayatno vā balavān iti nigadyate

The question as to which is more powerful, the mercy of the spiritual master or one's own effort is addressed in the next *sūtra*.

Sūtra 45: *om līṅgabhūyastvāt taddhi baliyas tad api*

Translation: Due to being indicated in many places [in the Vedas], the mercy of the guru is certainly more powerful.

Commentary: *ṛṣabhādibhyo vidyām jñātvā 'pi satyakāmena “bhagavāṁs tv eva me kāmo brūyāt śrutarṁ*



Deities of Gaura Nityananda, Advaita and Sita Thakurani, the wife of Advaita, at the Ahaulya Matha, the place of Advaita's home, in Jagannath Puri

hy eva me bhagavad-dṛṣēbhya ācāryād dhaiva vidyā vīditā
sādhiṣṭhaṃ prāpatīti” iti vacanāt “atra ha na kiñcana vīyāya”
ity anujñānād upakosala-vacanāc ca liṅgabhūyastvāt guru-
prasādam eva balavān. tarhi tāvatālam iti na mantavyam.
“śrotavyo mantavyaḥ” ity ādes tadapi kartavyam.

Even after gaining spiritual knowledge from the demigods who had appeared as a bull, swan, etc., Satyakama went to his initiating guru and said, “O Lord! Please instruct me in spiritual knowledge! I have heard from sages who are as good as the Supreme Lord that one’s spiritual knowledge can attain its highest perfection only when one hears instructions from an ācārya (guru).” [Chāndogya-upaniṣad 4.9.2]

It was also said there, “In this process [of gaining knowledge from guru], even though Satyakama was already perfect, he did not lose anything by hearing again.” [Chāndogya-upaniṣad 4.9.3]

By this incident of Satyakama hearing again from a guru, and by other incidents such as that of Upakosala [the disciple of Satyakama, who was initially refused initiation before the sacred fire by Satyakama, but later was given knowledge by the fire-demigods and still he did not become proud but again expected his guru’s mercy], it is seen that the scriptures abound in statements that prove that the mercy of the guru is the more powerful.

However, this should not become the cause of one ceasing one’s studies [and depending only on mercy]. The Upaniṣads say, “Truth should be heard and meditated upon.” [Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad 2.4.5] Therefore, one should also continue to perform one’s study and regulated duties.

Commentary continues: vārāhe ca —
guruprasādo balavān na tasmād balavattaram
tathāpi śravaṇādīś ca kartavyo mokṣa-siddhaye

In the Varāha Purāṇa it is said, “The mercy of the guru is extremely powerful. There is nothing more powerful than that. Still, for attaining liberation, one should perform the activities of śravaṇa (hearing) etc.”

—Translated by Hari Parshad Das from Sarvamūla Granthāḥ, 27 January 1969, volume I, edited by Bannanje Govindacharya, Akhila Bhārata Mādhwa Mahā Maṇḍala Publication, Bangalore.

I DID NOT WORSHIP SRI ADWAITA

By the medieval poet Premadasa

gauracandra nityānanda	advaita paramānanda
tina prabhu eka tanu-mana	
ithe bheda-buddhi yāra	sei yāu chāra-khāra
tāra haya narake gamana	

Lord Gauranga, Lord Nityananda, and the most delightful Advaita Acharya are three Lords who are in truth one

in body and mind. Fie on him who differentiates between these three. Such a person will indeed go to hell.

advaitera karuṇāya jive prema-bhakti pāya
gaurāṅgera pāda-padma mile
emana advaita-cānde paḍiyā viṣaya phānde
pāiya sei na bhajiluṇ hele

By the mercy of Sri Adwaita Acharya a soul attains prema-bhakti and attains the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga. Knowing all this, I did not worship him, and instead I fell prey to the noose of sense-gratification.

dhik dhik muṇi durācāra
kariluṇ asata-saṅga sakali ha-ila bhaṅga
nā bhajiluṇ hena avatāra

Fie on me, for I am a vicious soul. Associating with non-devotees, everything was destroyed, and I did not worship this incarnation of the Lord (Sri Adwaita Acharya).

hāte gale bāndhi jabe yamadūte laiṇā jābe
takhana ḍākiba muṇi kāre
premadāsa duṣṭamati nā ha-ila kona gati
emana dayāla avatāre

When the agents of Yamaraj tie my hands and neck and forcibly take me to hell, what shall I do? To whom shall I call out? Indeed, Premadasa is an evil-minded person and has an unknown destination due to lack of devotion to this incarnation of the Lord (Sri Adwaita Acharya). ❧

—Translated by Hari Parshad Das from *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, fourth edition, April 2010, compiled and edited by Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay, published by Shishu Sahitya Sansad Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata.



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THREE TYPES OF JAPA

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 17.155 – 158

trividho japa-yajñāḥ syāt tasya bhedān nibodhata
vācikaś ca upāṁśuś ca mānasaś ca tridhā mataḥ
trayāṇāṁ japa-yajñānāṁ śreyān syād uttarottaraḥ
yad ucca-nīca-svaritaiḥ spaṣṭa-śabdavad-akṣaraiḥ
mantram uccārayed vyaktam japa-yajñāḥ sa vācikaḥ
śanair uccārayen mantram īṣad auṣṭhau pracālayet
kiñcic chabdam svayaṁ vidyād upāṁśuḥ sa japaḥ smṛtaḥ
dhiyā yad akṣara-śrenyā varṇād varṇaṁ padāt padam
śabdārtha-cintanābhyāsaḥ sa ukto mānaso japaḥ

[It is described in the *Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa*.] There are three types of *japa-yajña*. Listen to their respective names and qualities. The three types are *vācika-japa*, *upāṁśu-japa* and *mānasa-japa*. Among these three, each is superior to the one before it. *Vācika-japa* is chanting which is characterized by high and low pitches along with clear pronunciation and audible utterance. *Upāṁśu-japa* is that in which the lips move slightly and the *mantra* is spoken softly in such a way that it is audible only to oneself. *Mānasa-japa* is that in which the chanter mentally connects the syllables of the *mantra* to form a word and then mentally connects the words to form the *mantra*, thereafter meditating on the meaning of the *mantra*.

Note: “*Japa*” in such contexts generally refers to recitation of *gāyatrī-mantra* and similar texts. The high and low pitches specified in this verse indicate *japa* of Vedic *mantras* and specifically *gāyatrī*.” Reciting prayers in *pūjā* is called *stuti* or *stavana*. ❧

—Translated by Hari Parshad Das from *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsaḥ* with Bengali Translation, Bangabda 1318 (Corresponding to 1911 A.D.), edited by Shri Shyamacharan Kaviratna.



Indian village scene

Drawing by J. Lockwood Kipling, 1917



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 316

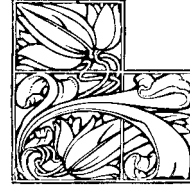
Śrī Saphalā Ekādaśī

29 December 2013

Circulation 6,760

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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
- **DECEIVING THE GURU**
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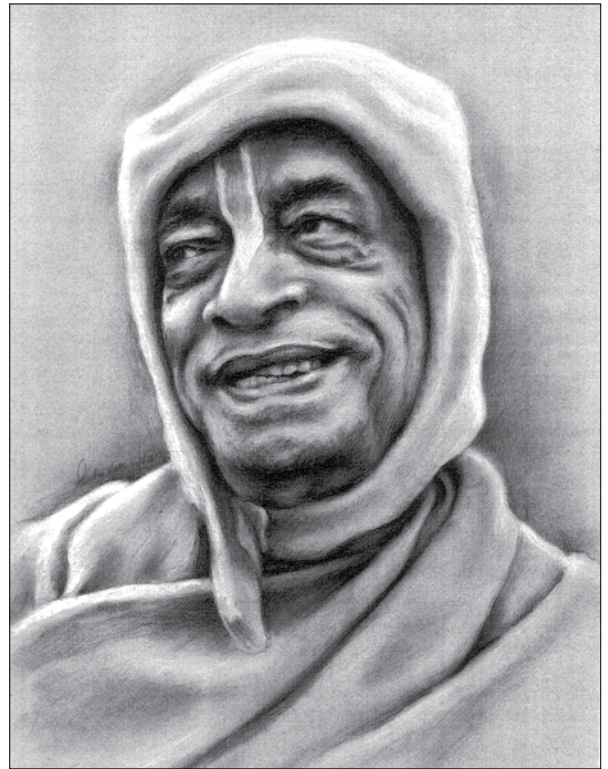
HARE KRISHNA FESTIVALS

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Regarding festivals in Boston, you may hold as many as possible. If you can hold such festivals daily, that is also nice. Our movement is for *ānanda*, simply bliss, and the method of pushing this movement is chanting, dancing, feasting and philosophizing. In our almanac there are many festivals in every month. I am enclosing some festivals which were already held in Los Angeles, and if you perform them I will give you a long list of others. But don't embarrass yourself at present with greater plans than you can handle. The more you will get devotees the more you will be able to perform nice festivals. (Letter to Jadurani, 15 July 1969.)

I am so glad to note that you are planning a Hare Krishna festival in Detroit, on the order of the ones we held in India (Bombay and Calcutta). We had a very large tent, displayed our literatures, had *kīrtanas* and *ārātī* ceremony for Radha and Krishna, spoke some on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and distributed *prasādam* sumptuously, to not less than 20,000, and as many as 40,000 people came daily to participate; it was so successful. And our magic was simply this chanting and dancing; that's all. You can do likewise in Detroit as far as possible and it will be a great event. Perhaps soon we can have such big festival in all the big cities in your country also. (Letter to Batu Gopal, 8 July 1971.)

It is very nice that you are holding festivals in the San Diego center. We are finding these festivals very successful for attracting the citizens to our activities.



Painting by Drdha Vrata Das

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

More and more these festivals may be held, at least one very large festival in a year, simply for glorifying Krishna in public places. It is not that a specific holiday or theme has to be chosen. We are simply calling our Indian programs "A Hare Krishna Festival". But if there are some holidays you specifically like, you plan them together with Karandhara by adjusting to the local taste. (Letter to Bhakta Das, 20 November 1971.)

In Bombay we have just celebrated our second Hare Krishna Festival and it has come out very successful.

More than 20,000 people attended last evening's program. A special feature was the "Question and Answer" booth where 24 hours, day and night, one of our *sannyāsīs* answered all philosophy questions. So the people were impressed that we are not sentimentalists as it seemed but have substantial philosophical footing. (Letter to Karandhar, 26 January 1973.)

Concerning the festivals, it is a very good idea to have festivals on the major celebrations, at least four to five each year. (Letter to Jayapataka Swami, 6 June 1976.)

So far the speaking engagements are concerned, they must be well organized and sponsored so that there will be enough publicity and many people will come. We are not cheap — we want to speak something — but there must be good accommodations provided. There must be good sound system, and there must be good publicity beforehand so that many may know of us and come. (Letter to Uddhav and Chidanand, 26 February 1968.) 🌸

DECEIVING THE GURU

From the *Mahābhārata*, *Śānti-parva*

When the great war had ended and appropriate libations had been offered to all those who had been killed, the Pandavas, Vidura, Dhritarashtra, and all ladies from the royal palace stayed outside the city for a month on the banks of the Ganges for the purpose of self-purification.

At that time, many saints, ascetics and perfected souls approached King Yudhisthir. They included Vyasadev, Narada, Devala, Devasthana, and Kanva along with their respective disciples. Besides these sages, many other *brāhmaṇas* who were knowers of the Veda had also arrived along with other devoted householders and graduated students.

Yudhisthir offered worship to all of them according to their seniority. Thereafter, the sages were offered opulent seats to sit upon. After accepting worship from Yudhisthir on the banks of the Ganga, those thousands of sages tried to console him.

Sri Narada Muni, after conversing with other sages like Vyasa, etc., asked Yudhisthir as follows, "O King! By your strength and the mercy of Lord Krishna, you have won over the earth in a religious way. How fortunate it is that you have escaped alive from this war! You are dedicated to following *kṣatriya-dharma*. Are you happy now, O King? After earning much wealth, does your mind trouble you in any way?"

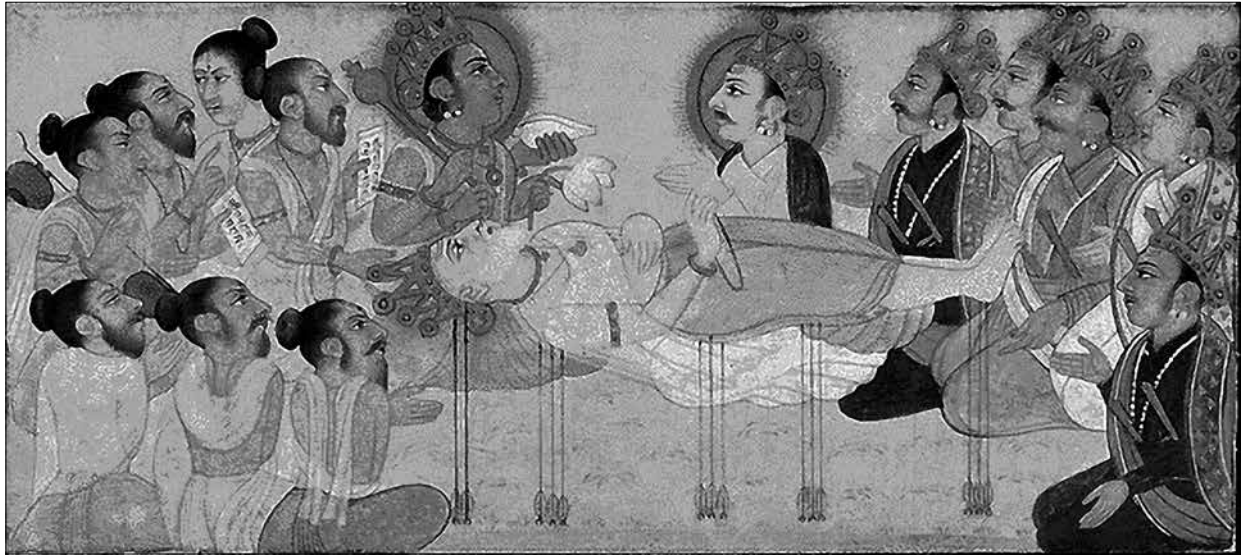
Yudhisthir replied, "O best amongst the sages! Due to being sheltered by Krishna, due to the blessings of the *brāhmaṇas*, and due to the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, I won over this planet. However, my heart is always afflicted with pain for I destroyed my dynasty simply due to my greed. After losing Subhadra's son, Abhimanyu, and the sons of Draupadi, this victory appears as good as defeat to me.

"Draupadi is always engaged in our welfare. Her sons and brothers were all slaughtered in the war. O sage! Now it greatly pains me whenever I look at her. And if this was not enough, my mother Kunti has put me in greater distress by hiding the fact that Karna was our brother. Karna — who had the strength of ten thousand elephants, who had no other warrior equal to his strength, who was extremely intelligent, charitable, merciful, and the upholder of vows, who had complete confidence in his strength, who was swift in delivering weapon attacks and fighting in unique and surprising ways, whose valor was exquisite — was our brother who was secretly bought into this world by Mother Kunti. He was our brother! Mother Kunti told us all this while we were offering libations for him.

"She also said that he was born from the sun god. When Karna was born, Mother Kunti, who was unmarried, put him in a box out of fear of public opinion and cast away the box in the flow of the Ganga. Thus, Karna, who was considered by the entire world as the son of a servant lady named Radha, was actually our brother and the eldest son of Kunti.

"Not knowing this, I killed him due to my greed. Thinking about this, my body feels a burning sensation. None of us five brothers knew about his real identity. He knew that he was the son of Mother Kunti, for she had once approached him and told him the truth. Yet he did not agree to a truce. Back then, he told Mother Kunti that he was unable to leave Duryodhan, for if he would leave Duryodhan then he would become infamous as a lowly, ungrateful soul. Many would have said that Karna, being afraid of Arjuna, had declared a truce. Therefore Karna told Mother Kunti that he would seek a truce only after winning over Arjuna in battle.

"Hearing this, Mother Kunti had requested him with a trembling voice to spare the remaining four brothers. He assured Mother Kunti that even if any of the other four brothers were trapped by his arrows, he wouldn't kill any of them. If he would be killed,



Unknown artist.

Bhishmadev on the bed of arrows speaking to Yudhisthir

Arjuna would live, and if Arjuna would die, he would live. In this way he assured Mother Kunti that in either case she would still have five sons.

“This was kept a secret by Karna as well as by Mother Kunti. Hence our own brother was killed by our hands! If Karna and Arjuna would have been with me I could have defeated even Indra. When the ill-minded sons of Dhritarashtra were giving so much trouble to Draupadi in the assembly during the dice game, the harsh words of Karna certainly caused a great deal of anxiety for me. However, my anger against him diminished when I looked at his feet because they resembled the feet of Mother Kunti.

“My mind would never become too angry at him, but I never knew why. O sage! Can you please tell me why Karna’s chariot was caught by the force of the earth, and what caused all this misfortune to fall on him? Kindly tell me all this, for you are the knower of past, present and future.”

Hearing this, Sri Narada replied, “Although this is a secret known only to the demigods, I am revealing it to you, O Yudhisthir. The demigods were thinking of a way to rid the earth of its burden in the form of the *kṣatriyas* by having them all slaughtered, and thus purified by weapons they would attain heaven. In order to achieve this, they arranged for the effulgent Karna to be born from the maiden Kunti. His nature from birth created enviousness in his mind towards the strength of Bhima, the agility of Arjuna, your intelligence, and the good conduct of Nakul and Sahadev. Seeing that the general populace loved you

very much, he would burn with anxiety. Therefore, he made friends with Duryodhan from his very youth.

“Seeing Arjuna’s excellence in archery, he once approached Dronacharya and requested him in a lonely place — ‘Gurudev! I would like to learn the art of throwing and retracting a *brahmāstra*.’

“Dronacharya knew of the rivalry between Karna and Arjuna. Dronacharya also knew of Karna’s malicious nature. He therefore told Karna, ‘Only a *brāhmaṇa*-born or *kṣatriya*-born who has properly followed all his vows is eligible to learn this science.’

“Hearing this, Karna humbly said, ‘Very well,’ and taking permission from Dronacharya he immediately left that place. He then approached Sri Parshuram and falsely introduced himself as a *brāhmaṇa* from the lineage of Bhṛigu. He offered obeisances to Sri Parshuram and became his disciple. Sri Parshuram welcomed him, saying, ‘Welcome son! Stay here happily.’

“Karna then stayed peacefully at Mahendra Hill, the residence of Sri Parshuram. There he began the study of the science of throwing and retracting the *brahmāstra*. There he got the opportunity to meet many demigods, heavenly singers, and other denizens of heaven.

“One day, as he was walking alone near the residence of Parshuram near the ocean, with a sword and a bow in his hand, a cow belonging to a Vedic reciter suddenly approached him. The sages did not come to bring her back for they were busy in their daily fire sacrifices.

“By the arrangement of providence, Karna mistook the cow to be a violent animal and chopped off her head with his sword. When he realized what had happened,

he went to the *brāhmaṇa* who owned her and confessed his sin. The *brāhmaṇa*, being angry at Karna, cursed him, saying, 'You sinner! You are destined to be slaughtered yourself. When your end approaches near, the earth will firmly grab the wheels of your chariot and your head will be chopped off from your body.'

"Karna tried to please the *brāhmaṇa* by giving many cows and other valuables in charity to him, but the *brāhmaṇa* said that the curse could not be retracted. Lowering his head with anxiety, Karna returned back to Sri Parshuram.

"Parshuram was extremely pleased on seeing Karna's strength, affection, service attitude, and self-control. He taught all sciences related to the discharge and retraction of the *brahmāstra* to Karna.

"One day, when Sri Parshuram experienced some fatigue due to fasting, he thought of taking rest. Out of affection, he took rest in Karna's lap. At that time, a deadly stinging carnivorous insect who would feed on the blood and flesh of others climbed onto the lap of Karna and pierced the leg of Karna with his stinger. Due to the wound caused by the sting, Karna's leg started slowly bleeding. Karna did not move even a bit, although he was in much pain, for he did not want to wake up his guru. When the blood dripped on Sri Parshuram's body, he woke up and said to Karna, 'Hey! You've become impure. What happened? Please tell me without fear.'



SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:

Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir

National Highway No. 5, IRC Village

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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"Karna told of the insect's sting. As soon as Sri Parshuram saw the insect, he killed it with his mere glance. A surprising event then occurred. A fearsome demon became visible in the sky. The demon folded his hands in front of Sri Parshuram, and said, 'O greatest amongst sages! Thank you for relieving me of the hellish situation of life that I was suffering in. Now I will return back to the place that I had come from.'

"Sri Parshuram asked the demon, 'Who are you and how did you fall into such a dreadful condition of life?'

"The demon replied, 'O Lord! In *satya-yuga* I was the demon named Damsha. I forcibly tried to kidnap the wife of the sage Bhrigu. I was cursed in turn by him to fall into a hellish condition of life as a carnivorous insect. Upon my begging forgiveness from him, he blessed me by saying that the duration of the condition of being in that insect body would end by the glance of Sri Parshuram, who would be born in his dynasty. Now that I've met you, my punishment is over.' Saying this, he left that place after paying obeisances to Sri Parshuram.

"Parshuram then angrily asked Karna, 'O fool! The pain of the sting of that kind of insect is something that a *brāhmaṇa* can never tolerate. Your tolerance of pain is like that of a *kṣatriya*. Tell me actually who you are.'

"Afraid of the consequences, Karna fell on the ground and revealed his identity by saying, 'O Lord! I am born in a caste named *sūta* which is distinct from a *brāhmaṇa* and a *śūdra*. People address me as Radheya, the son of Radha. Being greedy to learn the science of the *brahmāstra*, I lied to you. Since the guru who guides us is as good as our father, I had uttered the name of your lineage when you asked me mine.'

"Saying this, Karna trembled and fell on the ground while folding his hands. Sri Parshuram laughed sarcastically, and said, 'O fool! By speaking lies to me you have cheated me. Therefore, when your death will be near and you'll most desperately need this *brahmāstra*, you'll forget all about invoking it. However, in all other times of war you will remain unmatched.' Saying this, Sri Parshuram left.'

Sri Narada concluded, "All these factors, including the fact that Karna's divine armor and earrings were taken away by Indra, contributed to his death. Therefore, O Yudhisthir, do not lament the death of Karna, knowing it to be a pre-destined event." ❧

— Translated from Hindi by Hari Parshad Das. *Samkṣipta Mahābhārata*, Volume 2. Edited by Jaydayal Goyandka. Gita Press, Gorakhpur.